

Social Scientist

(4)

CH

5

32

Sociology & Sociological Radicalism □ Colo-
alization of Indian Economy, 1757-1900 □ Ch-
Character of Indian Constitution □ Theories
State: Aristotle to Marx □ India-China: Under-
development and Revolution □ Science Policy Stud

Social Scientist

Editor
Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor
Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation
SOCIAL SCIENTIST
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

KP 3560

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Six Months : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11
Air Mail : Annual \$ 17

(In Pound Sterling)

Sea Mail : Annual £ 4.50
Air Mail : Annual £ 6.00

Single Copy Rs 3

CUB-HO 6126-4-AP 300

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 3 MARCH
NUMBER 8 1975

CONTENTS

- S C Varma** 3 Sociology and Sociological Radicalism
Irfan Habib 23 Colonialization of the Indian Economy, 1757-1900

NOTES

- Hari Chand** 54 Class Character of the Indian Constitution
Arvind N Das 63 Theories of State: Aristotle to Marx

BOOK REVIEWS

- Mohan Thampi** 70 India-China : Underdevelopment and Revolution
R P 75 Science Policy Studies

Articles, notes and book reviews express the views of their authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr HARI CHAND teaches law in Delhi.

ARVIND N DAS is research officer at the ANS Institute of Social Studies, Patna.

Dr IRFAN Habib is professor in history at the Centre of Advanced Study, Aligarh Muslim University.

Dr MOHAN THAMPI teaches English at Banaras Hindu University.

Dr S C VARMA teaches sociology at Lucknow University.

positivism. According to Comte,

it is only by the positive polity that the revolutionary spirit can be restrained ... the positive spirit tends to consolidate order, by the rational (sic) development of a wise (sic) resignation to incurable (sic) political evils ... A true resignation—that is, *a permanent disposition to endure, steadily, and without hope ...*¹ (emphasis added).

Indeed, it was no accident that sociology was sired by the founder of (modern) positivism.

Bureaucratic-Mechanistic Approach

It is this conservative spot which sociology still carries in America. In fact, as Martin Nicolaus aptly observes: "In the United States, sociology originally served primarily as a conduit through which European conservative social thought was introduced into the American academic milieu."² If anything, the Americans have made sociology an even more insidious ideological weapon against revolutionary mode of social analysis and change through their diversionary stress on 'methodological' sophistication, hyper-quantification and what C Wright Mills rightly bewails as "bureaucratic ethos", that is, extreme specialization, unconcern with social philosophy, emphasis on research techniques and procedures, crass careerism, and the (resultant) lack of "sociological imagination" and impoverishment of the social scientist's personality. Needless to say, social researchers of this kind are totally unaware of the fact that problem selection is never quite free; they are also unaware of the fact that data are not simply a matter of data-collecting tools and techniques but also of the perspective, vision or social awareness of the researcher, that methods of data collection are not entirely bias-free or neutral, that the validity of a sample is best learnt not from statistical theory itself but from "reflections about the actual distribution of power within the society",³ that "social facts", though external and constraining in character, are neither (inanimate and static) "things" nor do facts speak for themselves but particular human observers, occupying particular social (class) positions speak for them, and that, as Derek Phillips points out, what is most urgently needed is not new research methods and techniques or new data but "new ways" or perspective of looking at existing data.⁴ For, indeed, "research without an actively selected point of view", as Lynd observes, "becomes the ditty bag of an idiot, filled with bits of pebbles, straws, feathers, and other random hoardings." In fact it is the very purpose of a "good scientific training" to, among other things, sensitize the scientist to important problems and give him "a selective point of view" or perspective.⁵ Of this alienated and alienating, that is dehumanized and dehumanizing, sociology, mathematical sociology is perhaps the best example—and the application of mathematics to the study of history by, for example, Fogel and Engerman has led them to the bizarre conclusion that the Negro slavery in America was not such a deplorable and harmful institution after all—harmful neither to the economy nor yet to the Negro slaves!⁶ This shocking state of the

social sciences (and humanities) is chiefly due to the fact that the social scientist is being reduced to the status of what Peter Berger calls "an aide-de-camp to an IBM machine."⁷

In the Service of Imperialism

With the phenomenal growth of its monopoly and finance capital, the United States of America has finally emerged as a super-imperialist power after the Second World War. And sociology, like the west European and American spy fiction, has actively served the cause of U S imperialism with the utmost ease, for the utilization of sociology (and sociologists) by the American monopoly capitalist ruling class for its imperialist foreign policy objectives are but an extension of the basically statusquoist and counter-revolutionary bourgeois class character of sociology; and the growth of US imperialism has greatly contributed to the economic and 'academic' growth of sociology in America and abroad. Most American sociologists may safely be presumed to be intelligent enough to know it, but Arnold Green is remarkably candid:

If the United States Government seeks to establish close economic, political and military affiliation with countries and peoples all over the globe, then we (sociologists) must know more than we do about those countries and their peoples. What are their cultures? What are the prevailing attitudes toward the United States, toward technological development? [Mark the curious equation between "attitudes toward the United States" and "toward technological development."] What beliefs and prejudices of theirs can be enlisted to draw them into our power orbit and what ones will have to be mollified or accepted before this can be done? What are the prevailing social class structures, the focal points of leadership? Whose co-operation is most crucial before various programmes are launched? After such programmes have been started, continuing answers to all these questions must be carefully gathered and checked.⁸

Indeed, Project Camelot and the abortive Himalyan Border Project were all U S counter-insurgency military and espionage operations, duly disguised as 'social science' research projects staffed with some prominent social scientists.

II

Textbook Sociology

No printed manifestation of sociology is more revealing of its bourgeois class character than the American sociology textbooks (perhaps because a textbook deals with the essentials of a branch of study). And there are no exceptions—be it a classic like MacIver and Page's *Society* or Kingsley Davis's *Human Society* and Harry M Johnson's much hailed (for obvious reasons) *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*. I will however take as an illustration Kimbell Young and Raymond W Mack's *Systematic Sociology* (Litton Educational Publishing, Inc. (1962), Affiliated

East-West Press Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1972).

Systematic Sociology is a bind of two books, namely *Sociology and Social Life* (2nd edition) and *Principles of Sociology* (2nd edition). The first, which analyses social relations (Pt I), social organization (Pt II), social institutions (Pt III) and social dynamics (Pt IV) within the 'systematic' framework of *structure, function, pattern and process*, is in fact the sociology of American social life, while the second book comprises research readings from "professional journals" as expository texts. No American sociology textbook is however complete without chapters on crime, delinquency, alcoholism, drug addiction, mental disorders and suicide—perhaps because these have become so characteristic of the present-day American society (of all bourgeois societies, in fact, including Indian). Hence *Systematic Sociology* also deals with these problems of "social disorganization", an euphemism for bourgeois decadence and by no means a value-free concept.

Thus Young and Mack's *Systematic Sociology* is not much different (in terms of content and approach) from the general run of American sociology textbooks—it is even profusely illustrated (in keeping with the latest trend). It only superficially deals with problems like racism (discussed in 'minority' and 'cultural' terms); shows criminal unconcern with such vital facts and issues as the US monopoly capital, imperialism and neocolonialism, Third World liberation struggles, and student activism⁹; and, to top it all, completely distorts the understanding of the economic and political phenomena. Examples are such statements as: "The type of ownership of property varies with the culture" (p 396); corporation "typifies mass society" (p 397); the state is a product of population growth—"as population grew, increasing differentiation of roles led to a breakdown of controls..." (p 416); and US imperialism is a matter of "preservation of external order" and "one result of our efforts toward the maintenance of external order is that our political structure is intertwined [a superb euphemism for imperialist stranglehold] with the political and economic institutions of a large share of the other nations in the world" (p 424). It is also significant to note that Book II, which is "a reader in theory and research", contains not a single selection from C Wright Mills (though the book has a section on "Political Sociology"), obviously because Mills is too leftist to be taken seriously by 'professional' and 'academic' sociologists.

III

Analytic Frames and Analyzed Phenomena

The fundamentally statusquoist and counter-revolutionary liberal bourgeois class character of American sociology is inherent in its dominant analytic frames, chiefly positivism, functionalism, middle range theorizing and behaviourism. Briefly, positivism is the cult of the obvious, and "the obvious," to quote Laing, "is literally that which stands in

one's way, in front of or over against oneself"¹⁰ in that it hinders us from grasping the reality which lies at the back of it; or, to put it differently, positivism is anti-dialectical and what Herbert Marcuse damns as "one-dimensional," and, further, it quietly slips from observing facts into justifying them, that is, treats 'is' as 'ought'.¹¹ Then, functionalism is idealistic, ahistorical and anti-historical and, therefore, inevitably obsessed with system maintenance, while Merton's middle rangery has been largely fruitless: "While theories of the middle range are universally praised", observes Lazarsfeld, "few examples have been carefully presented and analysed. Furthermore, it is not quite clear when an empirical generalization ascends from its low status to the more distinguished middle range level";¹² in any case, middle range theories apply only to middle range organizations and serve middle range decision-making and piecemeal reformism. Finally, behaviourism overlooks interests, motives and values—and is even envisaged by its high priest, B F Skinner, to take us "beyond dignity and freedom"!

Then, this statusquoist character of American sociology is evidenced by the social phenomena it carefully overlooks but gives a fleeting glance (for example, white racism and imperialism) on the one hand, and by the mystifying, idealistic, diversionary and euphemistic treatment it gives to the phenomena it does care to notice on the other, (for example, society, culture, class, social relationship, conflict, social change, modernization and development, mass society, social control, socialization and social disorganization etc.). Incidentally, the current 'peace research', like the "human relations" theory¹³ of industrial sociology, is pure functional sociology; and A Etzioni must know that, being an instrument of 'conflict resolution' and 'tension management' peace research is not at all a "non-conventional"¹⁴ use of sociology.

Professional Organization

The third thing which testifies to the bourgeois class character of American sociology is its professional organization which has been brilliantly exposed by Martin Nicolaus.¹⁵ Firstly, the career pattern of the sociologist is one of securing finances for research—research publications—promotion—more research funds—more research publications—further promotion

and so on up, until, as supervisor of graduate students, the successful sociological entrepreneur is in a position to start and manage younger persons on the same spiral. The inevitable consequence of this career pattern, if ability is held constant, is to reward servility...With a few exceptions, chiefly among the pre-war eminences, today's prominent sociologists are the direct financial creatures, functionally the house servants, of the civil, military, and economic sovereignty.

Secondly, the professional organization of sociology, namely, the American Sociology Association is but one of the branches of the "trunk of political power", with its (i) 80 per cent finances coming from the government and

corporate contracts the Association "services", (ii) "formal political mechanisms" resembling "those of colonial India, that is, guided democracy within the upper caste", and (iii) official journal *American Sociological Review* being increasingly rightist in terms of its content and orientation.

And thirdly, research is done in "subject population" from the standpoint of the interests, both domestic (control: .. "police and sociology are functional alternatives") and foreign (imperialist expansion and hegemony), of the US ruling class. Thus, as Nicolaus aptly puts it "...the cycle of sovereignty-sociology-sovereignty is neatly closed at both ends".

Reformist Perspectives

I will round off this necessarily brief (but by no means original) evaluation of American sociology with a rather long quote from J H Abraham :

It (American sociology) is still parochial, and lacks a sound philosophical and conceptual base, while its unhistorical perspective gives it an air of ephemeral insubstantiality. Its recent attraction to futurology is a symptom of this. Wedded to government or institutional grants as much of its research is, it displays its mediocrity in the choice of subjects for investigation and in the parade of computerized data. Hardly a single article in the *American Journal of Sociology* is without its rows of figures and square roots to prove either something that is not worth proving or something that any intelligent child can tell, or quite literally to prove nothing at all. Couched as it most often is in language of ineffable turgidity and pedantry, it is an unequalled example of the capacity of the human mind to fool itself and to fool others, the more degrading as it is done with complete impunity and with official backing and encouragement.¹⁶

The indictment is no doubt harsh but well deserved: consider, for example, H J Gans: "The Positive Functions of Poverty" (*AJS*, 78, September 1972), which reports the brilliant discovery that poverty benefits in every practical and observable way the non-impooverished groups. The indictment is also necessary to bring the American sociologists out of their Comtean-Weberian-Parsonian torpor. In any case, Abraham's view of American sociology is shared by some sensitive American sociologists themselves. Thus, for example, Lazarsfeld observes :

First our times are beset by burning social issues, but the American sociological journals are filled with insignificant little studies about the dating patterns of college students or the popularity of radio programmes...

Now the question could be raised, aren't there urgent problems in the United States? The answer is, of course yes. But they are of such complexity that empirical social research as it exists today can hardly cope with them.¹⁷

It must however be pointed out that not "complexity" but bourgeois (statusquoist-liberal-reformist) social-perspective is the basic reason

why these "burning social issues" and "urgent problems" are either completely ignored or cannot be adequately dealt with by empirical social research: "complexity" is largely an excuse.

IV

The Indian sociological scene is not much different. In fact 'Indian Sociology' is a subsidiary of the multinational American Sociology Inc. The management of the subsidiary is no doubt in Indian hands but that does not alter the fact that, like all other American subsidiaries, 'Indian' sociology is serving the imperialist interests (economic, political, military and cultural) of the U S A. And the growth of sociology (teaching and research) in India in the post-World War II period is directly related to the growth of American penetration of the Indian economy and polity as well as institutions of higher learning¹⁶ through research grants, visiting professorships, project consultants, book gifts, 'language' institutes and American 'literature' courses and so forth.

American Shadow and Substance

There are four reasons for this. First, the Indian sociology professoriat is mostly made up of "returnees" and (therefore) an American degree—any university will do, be it Princeton or Buffalo—is almost certain to catapult one into this all-powerful, feudalistic professoriat. Needless to say, this craze for the foreign, specially American, educated academics has been generated, encouraged and strengthened by the Indian ruling elites' fetishism of foreign degrees—the flight abroad and return with a foreign degree even makes a photo-news in the daily press!; and the U S degree-holding 'intellectuals' constitute our new academic aristocracy which is seeking to corrupt, mislead and demoralize our budding minds by engendering cynicism, escapism and a mercenary outlook amongst them.

Second, most of the sociology courses which are being taught in Indian universities are (therefore) modelled after the American courses (both in terms of content and emphasis) and that too of the pre-student protest days! Thus Indian universities are in a way awarding American sociology degrees. This, incidentally, makes it a little pointless to go abroad for the degree purpose: that is, unless one is after a brand name—and some status symbols like a refrigerator, laundry equipment, cooking range or stereo system etc. There might be some justification for the natural or medical scientists going abroad for higher training (though none for their not getting back—that is criminal betrayal of their own people); but the alleged necessity and desirability of a social scientist going to, say, America for the so called higher education is absolutely faked and untenable.

Third, the Indian academic market (I need not apologize for the expression) is glutted with American sociology texts, increasingly including their 'cheaper' student editions. To be sure, sociology is the "in" discipline; and its demand is great because of its possible uses ranging from national planning, industrial management and 'welfare' administration

to espionage, "pacification" programmes and sales promotion of cosmetics and contraceptives. But that is not the only or basic reason for this glut: the massive invasion of American sociology on India, and not only India, is part of the American ideological offensive, for sociology is the least ideology-(value) free social science. The exploitative economy of the 'cheaper' Indian editions of American texts, like Young and Mack's *Systematic Sociology*, is, however, also not to be ignored.

Research of Questionable Value

Fourth, the professional organization of sociology in India is fast developing on the American lines, with similar (1) career pattern, (2) power structure of Indian Sociological Society and content and orientation of its official publication, the *Sociological Bulletin*, and (3) research perspective.¹⁹ The implications of the emergence of the government-instituted Indian Council of Social Science Research (coupled with social science research institutes financed by Indian and American monopoly capital) for the *direction* and *uses* of 'Indian' sociology are too obvious to be stated here. I will only note the facts that the ICSSR is in the grip of top-flight "returnees" and other locally-bred liberal-reformist bourgeois social scientists and that it wants to have an elephantine budget of Rs 11.6 crores in the Fifth Plan, with the proposal to further raise it to Rs 17.6 crores in the Sixth Plan.²⁰

No doubt this amount is smaller, much smaller, than the amount spent on the social science research in the U S A. But is the U S to be our social science policy planners' reference country or model? The fact of the matter is that in the context of India's (1) mass illiteracy, (2) understaffed schools and ill-equipped science laboratories in colleges, (3) economic and technological dependence on other countries, (4) mounting mass unemployment and abject poverty, to spend such huge amounts of public money on social science research is utterly misconceived and unjustifiable, to say the least. And pray, what research? Who votes for whom and why, how are the fair-price shops working, what are the problems of the unemployed, why are the landless labourers and tribals agitated, what are the headaches of the unmarried mothers, how are decisions made in Zila Parishads, what are the problems of old people, why are the scientists frustrated, what is the role of transport in regional development, how are cognitive abilities effected by malnutrition, what are the health problems of student youth in relation to their sexual behaviour, and what is the cross-cultural content of nocturnal dreams! I have a feeling that social research has become an escape from action for the academics as well as the government; and these public-funded research projects are little more than academic status symbols, personal career boosters and patronage-distributing devices, with the government grant almost becoming a substitute for quest for knowledge and intellectual curiosity. But of course, when there is a general loot, why should the social scientist lag behind? A twenty-year moratorium on the public-funded social research would,

however, harm neither the development of the social science nor our hungry and poverty-stricken masses. For is not Maoist China doing better than India in both economic and intellectual spheres without doing such 'professional' social research?

Thus, it is in effect the US ruling bourgeois class which is determining the course or direction of the development of 'Indian' sociology by rigging its problem selection—as well as its methodological orientation and social perspective; for, as in the U S A, so in India the sociologist studies the oppressed and exploited—"the down people"—from the viewpoint of the oppressing ruling classes—"the up people"—who are his pay masters²¹. Bluntly put, 'Indian' sociology is not only statusquoist and counter-revolutionary but comprador sociology, which is quite in keeping with the character of the Indian bourgeoisie and their servant, the Indian sociologist. And this is why the authorities concerned treat the development of what C Wright Mills (rather loosely) calls "the sociological imagination" as something dangerous. For example, a National Service Scheme (instituted by the Government of India for colleges and universities) publication on the enrichment of sociology courses through NSS activities urges the students to work in slums and in institutions taking care of destitutes, beggars, prostitutes and criminals but cautions in parenthesis, "there is a danger that the students as a result of working always with underprivileged sections of the populations may tend to correlate symptoms of social and personal maladjustment".²²

Marxophobia

To be sure, many Indian sociologists do occasionally say that the "Western" sociological models or concepts do not apply to Indian conditions; and there is much discussion of the urgency and possibility of developing an *Indian* sociology—one view is that 'Indian' sociology has to be rooted in the "classical Indology" (Dumont and Pocock) while the other view treats sociology in India as "part of sociology everywhere" (Bailey). This is no occasion to enter the debate, but two points must be made. Firstly, the use of the terms "Western" is misleading in that the West is no longer an economic-political and socio-cultural unity but divided into capitalist and socialist systems; and secondly, the "classical Indology" could as easily—perhaps better—serve the interests of the present feudal-bourgeois setup and of counter-revolution as does the American sociology. Further, 'Indian' here means 'Hindu', and this poses two problems: (1) it is by no means easy to determine what constitutes *the* Hindu tradition and (2) Indology (therefore) easily lends itself to the promotion of revivalism and Hindu chauvinism (for example, G S Ghurye, *Social Tensions in India*, Popular Prakashan, 1971). To be precise, this whole discussion is sterile and escapist, ignores as it does the central and crucial issue of the class character of both the "Western" models or concepts and "classical Indology". Hence, for example, none of the forty-one participants at the All India Seminar on "Sociology for India: Teaching and Research",

even so much as mentioned the Marxist analytic frame; and the seminar itself suggested "A Code of Ethics for Sociologists in India", which, among other 'dos' and 'don'ts', stipulated: "Teachers in sociology should refrain from deliberately communicating ideologies in the class rooms and should not interpret facts and theories ideologically!"²³

This, it must be stressed, is nothing but the standard bourgeois prescription of sheer statusquoism or social irresponsibility, which flows from (i) the fact that the economic-political interests of those who profess and practice academic sociology are vitally linked with the status quo and from (ii) these sociologists' diligent administrative support and ideological upholstering of the established bourgeois class order. Further, these learned sociologists are still labouring under the illusion of value-(ideology) free social science, blissfully ignorant of the crucial insight which Marxism and the modern Sociology of Knowledge have given us into the historical-social determination and character of all knowledge. Such socially irresponsible sociologists advocate a separation of the sociologist's roles as sociologist and citizen. If pressed hard enough, they might agree that sociologists may serve social objectives; but they stubbornly evade the crucial question "Whose social objectives?". Hence we find such sociologists demanding, with G Lundberg, that the rigorous social science must yield results which could just as easily be used by a fascist as by a communist or a liberal and that the sociologist, as sociologist, should have little to do with who uses them!

V

New Sociology

The American sociological situation is, however, getting seriously disturbed: the protest against the established, academic and professional sociology is becoming more strident, and its rumblings can now be heard even in India. It must, however, be immediately noted that this protest has been generated by and is but a part of the wider protest—specially students—against the prevailing American and west European imperialist, militarist, racist and decadent bourgeois order. This social protest has jolted the social scientists' earlier eager and facile belief in the "end of ideology", "post-industrial society" and "stable democracy" myths assiduously fostered by Lipset, Bell, Aron, Touraine and others. Quips Bottomore: "What kind of science is it, one may ask, that can be so completely overthrown, in the space of a few months, by a student revolt?"²⁴ Or, as Martin Nicolaus puts it: "What 'science' is this, that only holds true when its subjects hold still?"²⁵

Be that as it may, "the last few years", observes Maurice Natanson "have seen the rise of a bold band of young social scientists who have not only challenged old attitudes but have insisted on locating their *professional* (emphasis added) activity in the midst of mundane reality and on finding clues for their work in whatever quarter seems lively and likely..."²⁶

Further, radical caucuses and even sessions are reportedly held at the meetings of the American Sociological Association; and the *Sociological Abstracts* now runs a section on "Radical Sociology". The reason for all this is not far to seek: it lies in the growing sense of crisis; in fact, according to M N Srinivas, the very demand for sociology is born of "collective distress", and "it looks as though the existence of a large number of sociologists is itself a comment on the nature of the society they live in".²⁷ However, while the sense of crisis, of collective distress, is frankly voiced by them, most liberal-bourgeois social scientists seek to confuse us about the *nature* or *character* of this crisis, discussing it, like R L Beilbroner,²⁸ in terms of industrialization, environmental pollution, urbanization or passing of traditional society. It must therefore be immediately noted that (1) this crisis is not a theoretical but a practical crisis in that it is the crisis of the concrete working of the capitalist system of individual and social life-organizations and that (ii) this crisis is not (basically) cultural, spiritual, or psychological (as the counter-culture wallas would like us to believe). As such, it is futile and absurd to seek cultural and psychoanalytic solutions to racism, poverty, unemployment, imperialism and neo-colonialism, and mental disorders!

Ending Oppression

Intellectually, this protest against the law-and-order, status-and-mobility and getting-along-with-others sociology owes much to Marxism, particularly to the marxism of the 'young' Marx—and to the 'marxism' of C Wright Mills and his New Left. So does the frantic call for a "new" sociology, variously labelled as 'radical', 'critical', 'humanist', and 'reflexive' sociology.²⁹ This is no occasion to go into the details, but the general idea is to extricate sociology from the morass of positivism-functionalism and cross-fertilize sociology and Marxism (which, it is said, will do good to both). However, the "critical sociology" is not Marxism; in fact, it is a revision—even an alternative—of Marxism, for Marxism, like "academic sociology," is alleged to be inadequate to explain the economic-political 'realities' of contemporary society, of the so called "post-industrial society", to be precise. The four-fold task of this "new" sociology, therefore, is to (1) expose the new social contradictions, (2) identify the new revolutionary forces, (3) interpret the new social protest movements, (for example student protest, black revolt and women's lib) and (4) determine the relationship of these movements with the working class. In brief, for the proponents of the so called 'radical' or 'critical' sociology the old division between capital and labour—and the resultant class conflict—has either totally disappeared or has ceased to be of central or crucial significance, giving place to new contradictions and conflicts between the 'technocratic elite' who control and decide things and those who are condemned to what Touraine calls "dependent participation".

Another point is the relationship between 'critical' theory of society and political action. Opinions differ: for example, the "power of negative

thinking" (emphasis added) seems to be enough for Herbert Marcuse (and Norman Birnbaum), but not for Alain Touraine. In general, however, the 'critical' theorywallas (and counter-culturewallas) have largely depoliticized conflict and regard criticism and change of the "superstructure" as central and decisive to liberation movements, to the overthrow of the capitalist system. This has rendered 'critical' or 'radical' sociology highly deceptive, for a genuinely critical theory of society is not only a theoretical critique of society but must (1) begin with the political economy and (2) be an instrument of revolutionary action, which is first and foremost political action; otherwise, the theory, howsoever 'critical' or 'radical' it might claim or appear to be, would remain barren, and even in a way legitimize the existing state of affairs and lead us into the blind alley of religious mysticism and bizarre and asinine God-men cults, which are even more diversionary than sociology. As such, Marxism is still the only genuine, valid and viable critical theory of society.

The problem, therefore, is not simply one of rescuing the alleged "liberative" elements of academic sociology with the help of Marxism *a la* Gouldner³⁰ (who has a love-hate relationship with academic sociology) but of "liberation *from* sociology". For, to quote Martin Nicolaus, "the point is not to reinterpret oppression but to end it"³¹ and sociology, let us face it, is just not equipped for such a revolutionary task.

Unequal to the Task

To explain: *firstly*, as opposed to Marxism, sociology by definition (i) deals with the socio-cultural superstructure, viewing it as something autonomous of its material foundations, (ii) regards society purely as an object of observation, separating theory and practice from each other: to combine the two, says Comte, is to "endanger both equally" and "the new social philosophy must carefully protect itself from that tendency, only too general today, which would induce it to intervene actively in actual political movements..."³², (iii) sectorizes society (family, caste, religion etc.), ignoring the interconnections among these sectors or phenomena, (iv) claims independent status precisely by marking out a sphere of the "social", which is even stressed to be primary and different from the spheres of other social sciences,³³ and (v) ignores, underplays or glosses over contradictions and conflict, especially between classes; and *secondly*, the so called radical sociology, as we have noted earlier, seeks to undermine, emasculate or defuse Marxism in a most sophisticated manner, to say nothing of the "business-as-usual" sociology, which is the livelihood of most sociologists. Then, it must also be noted that just as contrary to Gouldner's amazing contention, Marx did not merely liberate Hegelianism from its conservative structure but undid or demolished it by transforming and turning its central revolutionary element (dialectics) against it, that is, Marxism is *not* simply reformed or "left or neo-Hegelianism", so also, Marxism, contrary to Gouldner's liberal-reformist hope, will not liberate sociology from its conservative structure but abolish it—

that is, supersede or oust the *sociological* mode of understanding social life, relations and institutions. Marxism, to be sure, implies sociology (but *not* vice versa) in that it deals with the dynamic of total historical change in general and of capitalist society in particular; but then, Marxism does *not* treat this dynamic as *socio*-logical.³⁴ In any case, "in view of the forces and the money that stand behind sociology as an exercise in intellectual servility", as Martin Nicolaus points out, "it is unrealistic to expect the body of the profession to make an about-face".³⁵

Cap in Hand, but...

It is however interesting to note that more and more bourgeois social scientists are finding it necessary to make a respectful bow to Marx before proceeding to denounce or distort Marxism. This they do by (1) tearing Marx's concepts (e. g. alienation and class) out of their concrete capitalist context and (2) ignoring the interconnection among the different aspects of Marx's thought, only to consider and criticize one aspect in isolation from the rest. Thus, for example, Frances Allen³⁶ acknowledges Marx as "a tremendous stimulator of thought" but divides his "intellectual accomplishments" into "(1) contributions to economic theory, (2) contributions to sociological theory, and (3) endeavours connected with scientific socialism as an action programme". Then Allen declares that she is "not concerned with (1) and (3); and even with regard to his (Marx's) sociological theory, we shall restrict our interest to socio-cultural change". Not only this, Allen stresses that "the tenor of one's reactions (to Marxism) however, will be different depending on whether one is thinking of Marx the scholar or Marx the revolutionary advocate", herself regretting that "during the past century Marx the revolutionary advocate has triumphed over Marx the scholar". Now it is obvious that Allen does not know (or has chosen to ignore) the most elementary point about Marxism, namely "Marx the scholar" cannot be separated from "Marx the revolutionary advocate"; for, to quote Marx: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it". That is, Marx is a committed scholar—a scholar committed to socialist revolution, and it is this which has made Marxism a living and growing historical force: the sway and success of Marxism is entirely due to its correctly perceiving the real nature and source of the present-day crisis—of our "collective distress"—as well as the means to overcome this crisis. Need less to say, those who absurdly seek to divorce Marx the scholar from Marx the revolutionary and, further, regret "the triumph" of the latter over the former, are all bourgeois statusquoists and counter-revolutionaries—howsoever deep their bow to Marx might be.

VI

Indian sociologists—even including some of our "jet-set" and "book-a-year" and a-project-every-three-years³⁷ or 'scheming' sociologists—have also started making suitable 'critical' or 'radical' noises. This however

is not so much because they are genuinely convinced of the objective need to discard academic sociology as because of (1) the radical and leftist pose and posture of the powers-that-be at Delhi, (2) the opportunity which "Radical Sociology" affords them to snipe at Marxism—and Marxists—without getting branded as reactionaries (which is what they really are), and (3) the compulsion to identify with student and youth activists. Hence, firstly, these top-level sociologists are generally very disinclined to promote the professional career of hard-boiled or uncompromising and vocal Marxist academics (who want to change "the game and its rules"); and, secondly, the top-level sociologists' radical talk of 'relevance', 'social responsibility' and 'commitment' turns out to be a masterly exercise in utter verbosity, vacuity, vagueness and vapidness³⁸ (read any 'Welcome' and/or 'Inaugural' address delivered at our sociological conferences and seminars)—an exercise which is neither dangerous to their official positions nor of any concrete use, except that of justifying and servicing the reformist-reactionary policies of the ruling feudal-bourgeois class (the trick is to equate the ruling class or the state with the nation, society and people and the interests of the former with those of the latter).

Radical Masquerade

In fact it is easier to understand (and join issue with) social scientists like Ashis Nandy, who blatantly and brazenly treats the relevance question as a "dangerous trap" and a "conspiracy of incompetence",³⁹ than it is to understand such relevance-wallas who dare not answer "Relevance to what?" in less woolly and more precise and concrete terms than 'national development', 'social transformation', 'planned progress', 'directed change', 'modernization', 'social action' and 'social needs'! For example, J P Naik, Member-Secretary, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), does consider the issue of 'significance and relevance' to be "very important" but adopts an evasive, equivocal and evangelistic or pluralistic stand on it. Thus as to the criteria for defining "significance and relevance": "This is a difficult area in which differences of opinion and controversies abound. But I do not think that the problems involved are insurmountable and would, therefore, suggest that we should grapple with them". But this is how he himself grapples with these problems: "Significance and relevance has to be judged...on the basis of...the promotion of the discipline, i.e., to theory-building or to methodological improvement" (in which direction: bourgeois or Marxist?) and "the solution of our problems" (what kind of solution: liberal-reformist or left-revolutionary?). Finally, as regards the ICSSR policy: the ICSSR should "respect difference of ideologies and commitments within the community of social scientists, to remain neutral to all of them and to extend its support to all on the sole consideration of quality!"⁴⁰

Radicalism means "going to the root" (which is not to be equated with a backward cyclical movement or reversion). But there are two

conceptions of root: idealist (mental, spiritual, moral) and materialist (economic, political, historical), the difference being that, as Kurt H Wolff^{4 1} points out, while the first restricts the meaning of radical, the second gives a more comprehensive—a more radical—notion of 'radical'. It is my contention that sociological radicalism is pseudo-radicalism, based as it is on the idealist conception of root. In contrast, Marxism employs the second conception of root and is, therefore, truly radical. Hence commitment to Marxism is the acid test of radicalism, of social responsibility and commitment; that is, the question of relevance and social responsibility must be settled solely in terms of advancement of the exploited peasant and working classes' (Marxist) revolutionary consciousness and action against the existing feudal-bourgeois order. As such, it is shocking to see the so called radical sociologists of a country having sharp class divisions and exploitation, mass poverty and hunger, and the American imperialist noose round its neck, discoursing on the 'limitations' or 'failures' of Marxism on the ground of its alleged failure to cope with the economic-political 'realities' of the so called "post-industrial" American society, or on the grounds of its 'logical' untenability,^{4 2} or both. To be sure, Marxism is not and cannot be a dogma for being both the theory and practice of revolution; but it must be noted that Marxism is nothing amorphous either, and its fundamentals cannot be given up in the name of giving up dogmatism.

Root of the Matter

But most of our 'radical' sociologists seem to believe that prudence is the better part of commitment. Hence some of them are merrily beating about the bush—they do not even so much as mention Marxism in their mazy discussion of relevance and social responsibility—while others are either distorting both Marxism and Gandhism in order to establish the oneness of the two, or are simply making all kinds of wild revolutionary claims for Gandhism! Evidently neither such play-it-safe nor such run-with-the-hare-and-hunt-with-the-hound and muddle-headed 'radical' social scientists can be of any use to the genuine radicalization of the social sciences as well as the consciousness of the exploited classes. This, needless to say, is also true of those social scientists who are still smugly clinging to the technical criteria in the name of excellence, for : "To limit judgement solely to "autonomous" technical criteria is in effect not only to allow but to require men to be moral cretins in their technical roles".^{4 3} That is, the disinclination, inability and failure to transcend the so called purely or autonomous technical criteria is the fundamental failing—both human and intellectual—of (so called) academic and professional standpoint. Secondly, it is imperative to explore and expose the politics of a sociological work—theoretical or applied—precisely because (i) there is nothing like 'pure' thought (which is but a facade) and (ii) ideas are tools or weapons (of status quo maintenance or of change). Thirdly, not the Marxists, whom the academic social scientists (and traditionalist, that is

revivalist thinkers like Hannah Arendt) are quick to accuse of anti-intellectualism, but the academic social scientists are guilty of real and most harmful type of anti-intellectualism, servilely servicing as they do the policies and programmes of exploitative and oppressive bourgeois rule; in any case, Marxists' (activist) anti-intellectualism is evidently intellectually more bracing and illuminating and humanly more beneficial than, and preferable to, the (diversionary and anti-revolutionary) intellectualism of academic, professional and traditionalist social scientists and philosophers. But it bears repetition that the intellectual and moral cramp caused by severe technicalism (and professionalism) cannot be cured by a "dilettante foray" into Marxism and vague, sentimental and soulful humanistic ideas of liberal-reformist social scientists;⁴⁴ and to those who exclaim "cliche! cliche!!" at the very mention of Marxism and revolution in the sociological discussion—to such 'radical' Indian sociologists I will retort with Laing: "One man's revolution is another's platitude"⁴⁵

¹ Quoted in Irving M Zeitlin, *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, Prentice-Hall, 1968, pp 74-75. Incidentally, Robert Merton has to the best of his ability tried to meet certain methodological, linguistic or vocabular and Orwell's 1984-ish charges made against sociology: that sociology is purely empiricist-positivist, that its dependence on statistics is utterly misconceived, that sociology indulges in jargonism, that sociological truths are beyond discovery because of lack of any uniformity in human behaviour on account of man's unpredictability, that sociology provides knowledge which could be used to manipulate human beings, and that sociologists are much divided amongst themselves. But, interestingly enough, Merton does not even so much as mention the *political* charge of bourgeois statusquoism and counter-revolutionism against sociology, to say nothing of his answering it. See Robert K Merton, "The Case for Sociology", in John W Kinch (Ed.) *Sociology in the World Today*, Addison-Wesley, 1971. In another paper of his, however, Merton does refer to the political charge against sociology. But he asserts, with the help of two or three examples, the "cognitive agreement" between Marxist and "so called bourgeois" sociologists: the difference and clash between the two, says Merton, is over the "evaluation" of consequences (of various social processes, like social mobility, and social institutions like religion). But that precisely is my point, that is, "evaluation ... of consequences" or "value disagreement" is too vital (both to society and the disciplines studying it) to be ignored, glossed over or played down *a la* Merton and other (*not* "so-called") bourgeois sociologists in typically anti-Marxist and counter-revolutionary style. See Robert K Merton "Social Conflict over Styles of Sociological Work", James E Curtis and John W Petras (Eds.) *The Sociology of Knowledge*, Gerald Duckworth, 1970, especially pp 525-526.

² Martin Nicolaus, "The Professional Organization of Sociology: A View from Below" in Robin Blackburn (Ed.) *Ideology in Social Science: Readings in Critical Social Theory*, Collins/Fontana, 1972, p 49.

³ The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, translated by John Viertel, Heinemann, 1973, p 122. The book suggests a fruitful distinction between "administrative social research" and "critical research": the former is intended and designed to service the policies of the ruling class while the latter seeks to expose the basic oppressive and exploitative character of the established class order.

As already indicated in the paper, much of U S social research abroad (especially in Latin American and other Third World countries, both friendly and antagonistic or even neutral) is political and military intelligence research. Thus Friedrichs, writing of Project Camelot, observes: "Two parallel but distinct vocabularies were maintained

—one military with military justifications, the other sociological with social-scientific justifications—illustrating perhaps the sleight-of-hand manner in which *rule theory* is able to transform military intelligence work into value-free social research without the slightest change in the activity itself” (emphasis added). See R W Friedrichs, *A Sociology of Sociology*, Free Press, 1970, p 122. See also I L Horowitz, *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot*, MIT Press, 1967.

No wonder, a book on social research can be easily subtitled “Strategy and Tactics”, as, for example, Bernard S Phillips, *Social Research*, The Macmillan Co., 1971. Phillips has dedicated his work “to those imaginative souls who are creating the scientific methods of the future”, but significantly, he does not even so much as mention Project Camelot; perhaps no book on social research does, though every social research book meant for “imaginative souls” must.

See also R L Beals, *Politics of Social Research*, Aldine, 1969, Gideon Sjöberg (Ed.) *Ethics, Politics and Social Research*, Schenkman, 1967, I L Horowitz, *Professing Sociology: Studies in the Life Cycle of Social Science*, Aldine, 1968, and Maurice Stein and Arthur Vidich (Eds.), *Sociology on Trial*, Prentice-Hall, 1963. It must be noted that none of these (and other such) books are ever recommended in our sociology course on social research methodology.

- ⁴ See Derek L Phillips, *Abandoning Method: Sociological Studies in Methodology*, Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1973, Ch 5. The book contains an excellent bibliography.

Similarly, Sigmund Koch, writing of Psychology, complains of “a meaningful thinking” which “... regards knowledge as the result of ‘processing’ ... presumes that knowledge is an almost automatic result of a gimmickry, an assembly line, a methodology”. See Sigmund Koch, “Psychology Cannot Be a Coherent Science”, *Psychology Today* 14, 1969, p 64.

In contrast, Keith Dixon for example absurdly asserts that the dominance of ‘theory’ is often a hindrance to the development of sociology. See Keith Dixon, *Sociological Theory: Pretence and Possibility*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

- ⁵ Robert S Lynd, *Knowledge For What?* Princeton University Press, 1943, p 183.
- ⁶ Robert William Fogel and Stanley L Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, Little, Brown, 1974.
- ⁷ Peter L Berger, *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*, Penguin Books, 1966, p 18.
- ⁸ Arnold W Green, *Sociology: An Analysis of Life in Modern Society* (First edn.) Mc Graw-Hill, 1952, p 8.
- ⁹ I must mention here A K Bierman and James A Gould (Eds.), *Philosophy for a New Generation*, The Macmillan Company, 1970. The book represents a most refreshing departure from the academic philosophy courses which are being taught at universities and colleges.
- ¹⁰ R D Laing, “The Obvious”, in David Cooper (Ed.), *The Dialectics of Liberation*, Penguin Books, 1968, pp 13-14.
- ¹¹ For a brief account of Frankfurt School’s celebrated critique of positivism, see David Frisby, “The Frankfurt School: Critical Theory and Positivism”, in John Rex (Ed.), *Approaches to Sociology: An Introduction to Major Trends in British Sociology*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974. See also Trent Schroyer, *The Critique of Domination: the Origins and Development of Critical Theory*, George Braziller, 1973.
- ¹² Incidentally, anti-positivism opens two alternatives: one is Marxism and the other is phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology; and it must be noted that, unlike Marxism, phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology are as statusquoist and counter-revolutionary in their political bearing or implications as positivism.
- ¹³ Paul F Lazarsfeld, *Main Trends in Sociology*, Harper (Torchbooks edn.), 1970, p 40. See also Keith Dixon, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁴ For detailed discussion see Nina Bogomolova; “Human Relations” *Doctrine: Ideological Weapon of the Monopolies*, translated by Katherine Judelson, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1973.

- ¹⁴ A Etzioni, "Non-conventional Uses of Sociology as Illustrated by Peace Research", in P F Lazarsfeld, *et al* (Eds.), *Uses of Sociology*, Basic Books, 1971.
- ¹⁵ Martin Nicolaus *op.cit.*, pp 45-60.
- ¹⁶ J H Abraham, *Origins and Growth of Sociology*, Penguin Books, 1973, pp 621-622.
On futurology, see Murad Saifulin (General Ed.), *The Future of Society: A Critique of Modern Bourgeois Philosophical and Socio-political Conceptions*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1973; also, Harold D Lasswell, "Strategies of Inquiry: the Uses of Observation", in Daniel Lerner (Ed.), *The Human Meaning of the Social Sciences*, Meridian Books, 1959, pp 104-112.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in G Osipov, *Sociology: Problems of Theory and Method*, translated by David Myshue, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1969, p 47. Osipov's slim volume is a good critical overview of Academic Sociology. See also Lucien Goldmann, *The Human Sciences and Philosophy*, translated by Hayden V White and Robert Anchor, Jonathan Cape edition, 1969, specially chapters I and II; Theodore Roszak (Ed.), *The Dissenting Academy*, Pantheon, 1968; E A Shils, *The Present State of American Sociology*, Free Press, 1948, and R W Friedrichs, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁸ See, for example, Benoy K Roy, *US Infiltration in Indian Education*, Perspective Publications, New Delhi, 1973. See also *Seminar* 112: *Academic Colonialism*, December 1968.
- ¹⁹ For some candid comments on the professional organization of the social science in India, See Rajni Kothari, "In Search of a Role", *Seminar* 157: *The Social Sciences* September, 1972.
- ²⁰ *A Report on Social Sciences in India: Retrospective and Prospective*, The Indian Council of Social Science Research Review Committee, 1973, Vol I, pp 159-160.
- ²¹ Derek Phillips agrees with Martin Nicolaus that sociologists are the lackeys of the power structure in that they serve to justify or legitimize the policy decisions of the power elite. But, interestingly enough, Phillips rejects the common belief that sociologists "actually know something important" that could be used to the benefit of the powers-that-be and against what Nicolaus calls "occupied populace". For, much of the information and knowledge possessed by sociologists is both inaccurate and inadequate because of "the demonstrably faulty quality of sociological data" coupled with the paucity or poverty of explanation in sociology. See Derek L Phillips, *op.cit.*, Ch 1.
- ²² *Enriching Curricula through NSS Activities—Sociology*, NSS Publication 7, National Service Scheme Unit, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, p 5.
- ²³ T K Unnithan *et al* (Eds.) *Sociology for India*, Prentice-Hall of India Pvt., Ltd., 1967, p 187.
Somewhat refreshingly different but by no means very illuminating and unequivocal was the *Seminar on Social Sciences and Social Realities: Role of the Social Sciences in Contemporary India*, held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, October 7-13, 1972. See also Abdur Rehman Momin, "The Facade of Objectivity: An Inquiry into the Epistemology of Value-Free Sociology", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol VII, No 44, October 28, 1972.
- ²⁴ Tom Bottomore, "Conservative Man", *The New York Review of Books*, October 8, 1970, p 20.
- ²⁵ Martin Nicolaus, *op.cit.*, p 59.
- ²⁶ Quoted in George Psathas (Ed.), *Phenomenological Sociology: Issues and Applications*, John Wiley & Sons, 1973, p 48.
- ²⁷ M N Srinivas, "Sociology and Sociologists in India Today", Presidential Address, Ninth All India Sociological Conference, 1969, pp 2-3.
- ²⁸ Robert L Heilbroner, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*, Norton, 1974.
- ²⁹ See, for example, J David Colfax and Jack L Roach (Eds.), *Radical Sociology*, Basic Books, 1971, specially Pt II.
Incidentally, the relationship between 'marginality' and radicalism is a moot point. I think marginality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of radicalism; or, to put it differently, marginality as such is not radicalism though radicalism calls for a

certain degree of marginality. And thus it is that radicalism is both negation and affirmation, whereas marginality as such is but a negation=living in some kind of a no man's land.

Another point. The academic sociology might claim that it also rejects the given (bourgeois) institutional framework—by ignoring, that is, by avoiding to concretely discuss that framework. But such a claim would be sheer double-crossing on the part of academic sociology; for to reject the bourgeois system is to fully expose it as well as collectively oppose it in (political) action—as is done by Marxism. Hence quiet and passive individual or even group dropping-out will not do; it will do no good even to the drop-outs, to say nothing of the bourgeois order.

³⁰ Alvin W Gouldner, "Toward the Radical Reconstruction of Sociology", *Social Policy*, 1970; see also his *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, Basic Books, 1970.

³¹ Martin Nicolaus, *op.cit.*, p 60.

³² Quoted in the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, *op.cit.*, p 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, Ch 1.

³⁴ Martin Shaw, "The Coming Crisis of Radical Sociology", in Robin Blackburn (Ed.), *op.cit.*, p 43.

To quote Lefebvre: "*Marx is not a sociologist, but there is a sociology in Marx*". This, because unlike the sociologist who deals with only a part or aspect of human reality, Marx deals with the totality of human reality (which includes nature) "in process of becoming and its present stage of development, a totality comprising levels and aspects which are now complementary, now distinct, now contradictory"; and secondly, whereas Marxism stresses the basic unity of all knowledge, particular social sciences like sociology, politics, economics etc., have fragmented human reality and knowledge making it impossible to grasp human reality in its totality or wholeness. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx*, translated by Norbert Guterman, Penguin Books edition, 1968, pp 22-24.

For a brief but sharply pointed account of Marxist or Concrete Sociology as it is being done in east European countries (and now in the USSR also), see Paul F Lazarsfeld, *Main Trends in Sociology*, *op.cit.*, pp 40-49 and Note 29a. See also Alex Simirenko (Ed.), *Soviet Sociology: Historical Antecedents and Current Appraisal*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967, and J J Wiatr (Ed.), *The State of Sociology in Eastern Europe To-day*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1971. But Lefebvre feels that concrete sociology is "still to be constituted on the basis of the dialectical method...". Dissatisfied with the view that historical materialism is "a kind of general sociology", he poses the problem of the conception of the universal laws of dialectics that the "materialist" sociology would apply to social development and suggests two possibilities: (1) these laws are treated as "part of philosophy" or (2) they are "linked with methodology". Now while the first view would be wholly un- and anti-Marxist in that it would lead to abstractionism, the second would mean "...historical materialism may be viewed as an introduction to sociology, but not as sociology!" see Henri Lefebvre, *op.cit.*, pp 18-19.

Incidentally, Donald G MacRae is also of the view that Marx is "not a sociologist", but MacRae's opinion that "his (Marx's) influence (upon sociology) has been unfortunate" is not at all incisive; nay, it is definitely rash—I think even Parsons and Raymond Aron won't accept it. See Donald G MacRae, "Karl Marx", in Timothy Reison (Ed.), *The Founding Fathers of Sociology*, Penguin Paperback, 1969, p 5. It seems that MacRae is either unaware or doesn't think much of the fact that it is precisely to the influence of Marx that sociology and sociologists owe their present humanization, deeper insight into social phenomena, and sense of social responsibility.

See also Andre Beteille, "Marxism and Modern Sociology", *Six Essays in Comparative Sociology*, Oxford University Press, 1974. A liberal that he is, Beteille neither views Marxism as fundamental nor does he view Marxism and sociology as irreconcilable, but regards sociology as the "basic discipline"! This, plus his failure to fully grasp or appreciate the intricate Marxist-Leninist concept of contradiction (so well discussed by

KP 3560

Mao Tse-tung, in "On Contradiction", *Selected Writings*, National Book Agency, Calcutta 1967) has rendered Beteille incapable of seeing any fundamental or qualitative difference between, say, the American and Chinese societies. Sociology, observes Beteille, "recognizes no privileged exceptions." But that precisely is the Marxist complaint against sociology—that it makes no distinction between a bourgeois and a socialist society: and Beteille's above observation itself reveals the sharp cleavage between Marxism and sociology.

- ³⁵ Martin Nicolaus, "Sociology Liberation Movement", in Trevor Pateman (Ed.), *Counter Course: A Handbook for Course Criticism*, Penguin Books, 1972; p 41.
- ³⁶ Frances R Allen, *Socio-Cultural Dynamics: An Introduction to Social Change*, The Macmillian Co., 1971, pp 160-161.
- ³⁷ For some interesting observations on 'project' research, see Andre Beteille, "The Problem", *Seminar 157*, September 1972, p 14.
- ³⁸ A meeting of some leftist and liberal sociologists was held during the IX All India Sociological Conference at Delhi in 1969. And it was perhaps as a result of the pressure of this radical caucus that the X All India Sociological Conference at Hyderabad in 1970 had a separate panel on the "Sociology of Socialist Revolution". But the whole discussion of the issue, I am told, was done on typically liberal-reformist bourgeois line of the government.
- ³⁹ Ashis Nandy, "Conspiracy of Incompetence", *Seminar 157*, September 1972.
- ⁴⁰ J P Naik, "National Social Science Research Policy" (mimeographed), 1972.
- ⁴¹ Kurt H Wolff, "Toward Radicalism in Sociology and Every Day", in George Psathas (Ed.), *op.cit.*, p 51.
- ⁴² See, for example, A K Saran, "The Marxist Theory of Social Change", in *Inquiry Oslo*, Vol 6, Spring 1963.
Saran is however equally opposed to the current (positivist-empiricist-behaviourist) concept of social science: A 'traditionalist' (whatever it means), he wants the social science to be 'based completely on First Principles of Traditional Wisdom' (whatever that means). See A K Saran, "The Concept of Social Science", in Keshav Dev Sharma (Ed.), *Basic Issues in Social Sciences*, The Academic Journals of India, 1968.
Incidentally, Radhakamal Mukerjee also rejects Marxism—its materialism and class struggle, to be precise—and the behaviouristic concept of the social science, but seeks to synthesize the modern Western scientific outlook and the traditional philosophical-metaphysical world-view; in contrast, D P Mukerji broadly accepts Marxism but also stresses the factors of Indian (Hindu) personality and culture and traditions in the study and engineering of social change in India. The most forthright Marxist sociologist is A R Desai.
For A K Saran's overview of sociology in India, see Joseph S Roucek (Ed.), *Contemporary Sociology*, Philosophical Library Inc., 1958, pp 1013-1034.
- ⁴³ Alvin W Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, p 13. The crisis, it must be noted, is not "coming" but has only been *deepened* in recent times.
- ⁴⁴ For example, Alfred McClung Lee, *Toward Humanist Sociology*, Prentice-Hall 1973, and of course, Karl Mannheim, *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950. See also Gordon Ratray Taylor, *Rethink: A Paraprimitive Solution*, Secker & Warburg, 1972, Florian Znaniecki, *On Humanistic Sociology*, Robert Biersiedt (Ed.), University of Chicago Press, and Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, The Free Press, 1973.
- ⁴⁵ R D Laing, *op.cit.*, p 14.

IRFAN HABIB

Colonialization of the Indian Economy,
1757 - 1900

FOR all students of modern Indian history, the colonialization of the Indian economy under British rule must remain a theme of overriding importance. Here was the first, the classic capitalist power creating, and transforming, the largest colony in the world. Marx was greatly interested in this phenomenon, and called attention to the roles of India as a source of primary accumulation of capital and as a market for the industries of the colonizing power. He studied, too, the destructive and the regenerative effects of British rule upon the Indian economy.¹ (1) Since then, and especially since R C Dutt's splendid two volumes of *Economic History* at the beginning of the century,² much has been written on the subject. Monographs on the various regions and on individual aspects of economy and administration during the period have naturally multiplied. There is, indeed, now a danger that the major strands may be overshadowed by the minutiae that detailed research always turns up. A recent debate³ did much to focus interest back on some of the important issues of the main theme; and this paper is written with the same intention.

An attempt is here made to offer (or, mostly, restate) a number of propositions about the process of colonialization of the Indian economy from 1757 to about 1900. I have a feeling that the different stages of colonialization, each with its own specific features, need to be distinguished;

and that there is need also to take into account a number of factors which in general discussions, at any rate, have seemed to escape notice. I hope that this paper would induce research workers, more qualified to speak on the subject, to enter the debate and help to reconstruct an acceptable framework for studying the economic processes of these hundred and fifty years.

I

In order to study these processes, it is imperative to keep in mind two given starting points. The first is the mode of production, especially the system of extraction of surplus (or, to use the more convenient term, exploitation) existing in India on the eve of the British conquests. The other is the nature of British imperialism, which was itself subject to change as British economy was transformed under the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

On the first of these points, I shall presume, in order to save time, to summarize the conclusions that I have been led to, on the basic arguments set out in some detail in two earlier papers.⁴

The primary method of surplus-extraction throughout India had come to be the levy of land revenue on behalf of or, in the name of, the Sovereign Ruler. This institution had come about not by "immemorial usage", as British administrators were inclined to think,⁵ but as the result of a historical process which can be studied⁶ and which would appear to belie the theory of unchangeableness of pre-colonial societies. Whatever its origins, it was now a cardinal principle of the Indian agrarian system, that land revenue should embrace the bulk of the surplus above the peasant's needs of subsistence.

Pre-colonial Economy

The way in which the claims to land revenue were assigned, that is, how this share of the surplus was distributed among members of the ruling class (by way of *jagir* as in the Mughal Empire) defined the basic elements of polity. Upon the expenditure of this vast surplus by the ruling class was based the urban economy of pre-colonial India, with its large craft production, large volume of long-distance trade and a considerable development of commercial capital.⁷

Subordinate to the land revenue, and nominally forming a part of it, was a share in the surplus that went to a heterogeneous hereditary or semi-hereditary class of superior-right-holders over the land, to whom the Mughal clerks gave the convenient designation, *zamindars*. Their nominal share varied from one-tenth of the land revenue in northern India and Bengal to one-fourth in Gujarat. It might actually have amounted to more than these shares, but the recorded sale prices of *zamindari* rights suggest that the income expected from them was always very small compared to the land revenue paid on the same land.⁸

One should remind oneself that cash nexus (payment of land

revenue in cash by peasants) was quite general in India;⁹ and that sales of zamindaris were quite common.¹⁰

A considerable degree of stratification existed within the peasantry.¹¹ The village was usually the unit of assessment of land revenue; and the upper strata of the peasants (*muqaddams* and the like), often shading off into small zamindars, imposed various rates on the peasants below them, in order to make up the revenue demanded from the whole village. This together with a financial pool for 'village expenses' and certain customary payments to village artisans and servants, formed the basis of the village community.¹² It seems that rather than being the self-sufficient republic, conceived of by Marx,¹³ the Indian village community was a mechanism of subsidiary exploitation of the lower strata of the peasantry and the village labourers by the upper strata. The ruling class, and perhaps the zamindars as well, found this system quite convenient, since by permitting an unequal distribution of the revenue burden, they ensured its fuller collection.

Beneath the peasantry, a large rural proletariat was to be found, largely consisting of the menial and untouchable castes. The zamindars and the upper peasants had their farms or *khud-kashta* holdings cultivated by labourers, who were paid wages in cash as well as grain, and who in some areas, like parts of Bihar and southern India, were held in conditions of semi-bondage.¹⁴

II

Tribute from Conquest

This was the kind of economy of which the English became masters in Bengal and southern India during the decade and a half following the middle of the eighteenth century. They stepped into the shoes of the sovereign power by virtue of acquisition of *diwani* in Bengal and jagirs in the Northern Circars and elsewhere. The legal forms which concealed these conquests are not material except in so far as they provided rationalization for the main acquisition, the power to levy and collect land revenue and other taxes.

The East India Company, which obtained this power, was controlled by the great merchant-capitalists of the City of London. These merchants had so far conducted a trade, based on the import of Indian piecegoods (muslin, calico, chintz), silk, indigo and spices, that was financed mainly by the export of treasure. Now, suddenly, they found in their conquests the ultimate bliss that every merchant dreams of: to be able to buy without having to pay, and yet be able to sell at the full price. This could be achieved by treating the entire revenues of the country as gross profit. From these the expenses necessary for maintaining government and army, and law and order—the costs of maintenance of the existing system of exploitation—had to be deducted in order to yield the net profits. These could, in turn, be invested for the purchase of

Indian commodities, the so called 'investments'. The purchase of these commodities in conditions where the buyer had a monopoly and their sale in markets throughout the world, further enlarged the profits before the 'tribute'—a word freely in use for it at the time—was finally received in England. The revenues from the conquests dwarfed the amounts of bullion that had once financed English trade; and, accordingly, the exports of Indian commodities underwent an enormous increase. British imports originating in 'East India' increased from £ 1.5 million in 1750-51 to £ 5.8 million in 1797-98, from 12 per cent of total British imports to 24 per cent. In contrast, the British exports to East India rose only from 6.4 per cent to 9 per cent of total British exports.¹⁵ Unlike the later imperialists, fighting for markets in the colonies, these pre-industrial conquerors were hunting for colonial commodities, which had the whole world as their market.¹⁶

Permanent Settlement, 1793

The source of the conquerors' profits, however, lay not in commerce, but in land revenue. Maximization of land revenue was necessary for the maximization of profits. It was this that led to the unrelenting pressure upon the zamindars in Bengal and to the system of temporary revenue-farms auctioned to the highest bidders. The actual collection of revenue from the 'diwani lands' in Bengal was pushed up from Rs 64.5 lakhs in 1762-3, under the Nizamat, to Rs 147.0 lakhs in 1765-6, the first year of the Company's diwani¹⁷. And, according to another set of figures, the revenues of Bengal increased from Rs 2.26 crores, in 1765-6 to Rs 3.7 crores in 1778-9.¹⁸ Such was the pressure that a famine which in 1769-70 carried off a third of the cultivators of Bengal, caused no decline in revenue assessments.¹⁹

This tremendous pressure upon revenuepayers, peasants as well as zamindars, could not but create a crisis in Bengal; and it is this crisis that forms the background to the controversy among the English administrators, preceding the Permanent Settlement. One group, represented by James Grant, argued that the land revenue could yet be considerably increased.²⁰ The other, of which Cornwallis became the spokesman, saw that the terrifying results of the tribute so far extorted left no alternative, but to offer a compromise to the zamindars, whereby the Company might be protected against a fall in its revenues, by resigning claims to any increase in land revenue beyond a figure now to be finally settled.²¹ Sir John Shore took an intermediate position. But Cornwallis, backed by his alarmed masters, won the day, and the Permanent Settlement was proclaimed in 1793.

Whatever the intellectual origins of the Permanent Settlement,²² and however profusely the word 'proprietor' might be used for the zamindar by Shore and Cornwallis, all this did not convert him into a real landlord. The bulk of the surplus went to the Company. The share of the zamindar, to begin with, was fixed at only an eleventh part of the

land revenue expected to be assessed on the peasants. The zamindars were thus really cast in the role of little more than hereditary revenue-farmers with fixed leases. In 1789 Shore estimated the total surplus of Bengal at Rs 3.25 crores, of which the Company exacted no less than Rs 2 crores while the remainder went to zamindars, other intermediaries and holders of 'alienated lands'.

Moreover, the position of the zamindars worsened on the morrow of the Permanent Settlement.²⁴ It is possible, though I have not found it suggested anywhere, that the immediate cause for this lay in the behaviour of prices. Cornwallis had expected the rule of silver gradually to fall, and so the prices to rise; but, if Brij Narain's series of prices of coarse rice in Bengal is to be trusted, the prices fell disastrously. From 1780 to 1789, the price of coarse rice had remained stable at an annual average of Rs 1.51 per maund; and for the next five years, 1790-94, the average remained nearly the same, at Rs 1.56. But in 1795 the price fell and remained low for the next 15 years, the annual average being only Rs 0.85 per md. during 1795-99, Rs 1.02 during 1800-04, and Rs 1.09 during 1805-09.²⁵ Faced with this fall in prices, which kept them at barely 65 per cent of the level maintained before 1793, it is not surprising that many of the zamindars could not collect rents from the peasants at the old rates in order to meet the fixed revenue demand of the Company, and had no choice but to sell out or see their right auctioned off to other bidders. It was at this time that a number of zamindaris passed by foreclosure of mortgage, sale or auction to bankers and merchants.²⁶ This was not, however, a transfer of capital from commerce to land;²⁷ but really an indirect annexation of that capital by the East India Company.

Siphoned Surplus

Thus, irrespective of intentions, there was no relaxation of pressure against the zamindars (and through them, upon the peasantry). What this pressure yielded was "the drain of wealth" to England. It is naturally not easy to compute the total amount of this drain or its annual flow. Much would depend on whether the calculation is on the basis of 'prime costs' in India, naturally depressed owing to the Company's monopoly, or on sale prices received by it on the Indian commodities; and whether one would consider only the 'investment' in the China trade, fully financed from Bengal, or the entire return on that investment. Taking the drain through the official channels of the Company alone, the drain from Bengal and Bihar would have amounted in 1779, by one criterion, to £ 737, 651; but, by the other, to £ 1,823,407 (at £ 1 = Rs 10)²⁸. Keeping to the conservative criteria, Furber estimates the total drain (including private remittances by Englishmen, often through the other European Companies) at £ 1.78 million per annum during the decade 1783-84 to 1792-93²⁹. One way, again, of estimating the amount of tribute is by looking at the balance of trade between Britain and 'East India', although this would exclude the drain through Europe. According to the

customs house figures, there was a spectacular increase in the excess of imports from East India over exports thereto, between 1789-90 and 1797-98. In the earlier year the excess amounted to £ 1.16 million; in the later, £ 4.15 million.³⁰ The year 1797-98 might, however, have been an exceptional year³¹. Taking the years 1797-1801, the excess of the value of imports works out at £ 2.81 million per annum; and during the years 1799-1803, at £ 2.58 million³². Let us then assume that £ 2.70 million represent approximately the annual excess in value of imports over exports. Since the customs-house recorded the prices at prime costs, or even simply accepted declarations as to prices prevailing in the country of origin, the imports were greatly undervalued. The official prices need to be multiplied by a factor by about 1.75 in order to be brought up to real prices.³³ One has also to take smuggling into account.³⁴ One should therefore put the total gain of Britain at the expense of India to well over £2 million in 1789-90 and over £ 4.70 million about 1801. This enormous transfer of wealth could not but have significant consequences for both India and England.

Indian Trade Pattern Disrupted

It is difficult to estimate the GNP of the British possessions in India which directly contributed the tribute. Grant in his calculations grossly overestimated the agricultural produce of Bengal.³⁵ Applying Shore's more reasonable estimate for the total agricultural produce of Bengal³⁶ to the British Indian possessions as a whole, in proportion to the land revenue they contributed,³⁷ we get a figure approaching 15 crores. To this we may add Rs 5 crores as value added by manufacturers, enlarging proportionately the estimate of 3 crores given by Grant for Bengal.³⁸ The total GNP of Bengal, Bihar, Banaras, the Northern Circars, &c., should therefore have been under Rs 20 crores per year during the period 1784-89, to which the calculations of Grant and Shore relate. Taking Furber's estimate (based on prime cost in India) for the drain during 1783-84 to 1792-93, we find that the tribute amounted to 9 per cent of the GNP—a crippling drain for any economy.

How this specifically affected the economy needs to be studied. It would seem that we should be looking for a two-fold effect. First, there must have been a considerable decline in Bengal in the kind of urban employment of troops, retainers, craftsmen in traditional luxury trades, servants, and so on, which was supported by the previous appropriators of the surplus. This is exactly the burden of Ghulam Husain Tabatabai's complaints in 1781.³⁹ Secondly, in so far as the transfer of wealth took the form of export of eastern Indian commodities, this resulted in a radical disturbance of the entire trading pattern of India. In the previous century the principal exports of Bengal used to be transported overland eastwards: much of muslin; and a third of silk.⁴⁰ The great silk manufacturers of Gujarat prospered on silk imports from Bengal.⁴¹ Now, however, of the 3.30 crores worth of "raw silk, cotton and silk

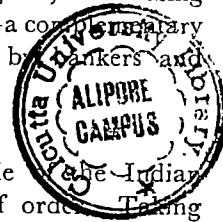
manufactures" of Bengal, no less than 1.68 crores worth was exported to Europe, 1.10 crores consumed locally, and only 0.60 crore left for export to other parts of India and the Middle East.⁴² This great diversion of trade could not but have had its effect upon Gujarat and other craft centres so far dependent upon silk from Bengal. There must also have been an absolute decline in Bengal's commerce with the inland regions, thus causing merchant capital formerly employed in it to become idle—a contributory factor, undoubtedly, in the acquisition of zamindari by bankers and merchants.

Colonial Base for Industrial Revolution

At the cost of a short digression, a word on the role of the Indian tribute in the economy of England would not be out of order. Taking the amount of the tribute to be about £4.70 million on the basis of sale prices, we find that it amounted to over 2 per cent of the British national income, estimated at £232 million for 1801.⁴³ We must remember that the total rate of capital formation in Britain was probably no more than 7 per cent of the national income about this time;⁴⁴ and this means that, at this crucial stage of the Industrial Revolution, India was furnishing an amount that was almost 30 per cent of the total national saving transformed into capital. The neglect of this factor in discussions of capital formation in England during this period is surprising. One would certainly have to assume a complete immobility of capital to suggest that this enormous accession of wealth in the hands of London merchants and nobobs did not directly or indirectly channel or divert capital into industry to any significant degree whatsoever.⁴⁵

By 1800, England was on the threshold of completing the conquest of the cotton textile industry by the machine. During the next thirty years the extension of the machine to most other sectors was to be similarly accomplished, culminating in the construction of railways, a sector that was to dominate British economy during the 1830s and 1840s. The need for capital not only continued, but increased. The annual rate of capital formation as a proportion of national income was maintained at about 7 per cent until 1830, whereafter it accelerated to reach 9 or 10 per cent.⁴⁶ This capital could not yet entirely be generated by 'capitalist circulation', and needed continuing primary accumulation. As against the rate of 9 per cent of national income for total capital formation reached during 1821-31 to 1831-61, net *domestic* capital formation accounted for only 7.4 per cent of the national income.⁴⁷ This meant that the pressure for tribute could not be relaxed.

But simultaneously, another aspect became increasingly important: the progressive subjugation of the Indian market for English industry. The British cotton textile industry consumed 16.1 million lbs of raw cotton in 1784-86; 99.7 million lbs in 1815-17; and 1050 million lbs in 1859-60. The enormous increase could not be sustained by the home market. The proportion of the output exported to total output during the successive



periods rose from 16 per cent in 1784-86 to 58 per cent in 1815-17; and 63 per cent in 1859-61.⁴⁸ Not only would these exports destroy the world-wide market for Indian textiles, but it would become necessary for Lancashire to invade India's own home market. A similar urge governed other new industries as they came up with mass products.

This dual economic assault upon India marks the second stage of British colonialism in India, set by the progress of industrialization in England. The duality was not without its own contradictions, complicating the realization of the tribute as well as the conquest of the Indian market—contradictions that we will comment upon presently.

III A

The Utilitarians

At the end of the eighteenth century, the official doctrine seemed to be that a limitation of revenue-demand was desirable in order to create private property in land, which would in turn lead to extension of cultivation and growth of commerce. What the Company was denying to itself by way of land revenue would be more than compensated in time by the enlargement of revenue from taxes on commerce.⁴⁹ Cornwallis had picked on the zamindars as the future proprietors; Munro, the architect of the *Ryotwari* system, thought a limitation of land revenue to a third of the produce would render land an article of saleable property for the cultivating *ryots*.⁵⁰

But very soon a different view became dominant: The view that neither the zamindars nor the peasants deserved to be proprietors. Any part of the surplus left in their hands was wasted; it must belong to the Company; and the business of land administration was to find out the cost of production so as to appropriate the net product in the form of revenue. The proponents of the doctrine were the Utilitarians, the ideological spokesmen of triumphant capitalism.⁵⁰

This doctrine was essentially a rationalization of the economic pressures already at work. The directors of the Company had become dissatisfied with the Permanent Settlement, even before James Mill had uttered a word on the subject. They flatly repudiated, in 1811, the Permanent Settlement that had been promised to the zamindars of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh, excluding Oudh) in 1803 and 1805. They then probably thought that waiving claims to revenue due upon extension of cultivation was unwise; but the rise in prices which took place in the second and third decades of the century, must have set a seal upon their disfavour. The rise in prices was such that the price level around 1830 was over 50 per cent above what it was in 1800.⁵² Most of the benefit from this went to the zamindars, who could enhance the rents from the *ryots*, while their own obligation towards the Company remained fixed in terms of cash. From the Court of Wards accounts of Bengal, before 1832, it appears that the zamindars' profits

now equalled or exceeded slightly the government revenue.⁵³ Here lay the basis for the growth of true landlordism in the permanently settled areas: in Banaras, permanently settled in 1795, the average price paid for zamindaris in 1837 was 15 times the annual revenue-demand on the land involved.⁵⁴

But the permanently settled areas of eastern India were to remain an exception, and the transformation of its zamindars into landlords cannot be held to be characteristic of the position of the zamindar class as a whole during this period. The characteristic operation of imperialism of this stage was seen only partially in the ryotwari settlements. It appears in its true fullness in the *Mahalwari* system of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces (annexed 1801, 1803) and the modified ryotwari system of the Bombay Presidency (mainly annexed, 1818). The ryotwari was a permanent arrangement only in so far as the land occupied by the ryot at the time of the settlement was concerned; even here it provided for a mechanism to adjust revenue to prices. The wasteland remained with the government to be given later upon such terms of its choosing. In the Mahalwari and Bombay systems, there was never a permanent settlement; only short leases, at first, and then settlements for 20 or 30 years, in 1830s and 1840s.

Pressure on Agrarian Economy

In studying the various principles and methods of assessment that were employed, one is struck by the divergence between what should, at first sight, have happened and what actually resulted. On paper, in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, the land revenue was reduced from 91 to 83 per cent of the total 'rental' in 1822, to 75 per cent by the Regulations of 1833, and to 66 per cent by the Directions of 1844. In 1855 for future settlements it was reduced to 50 per cent by the so called Saharanpur Rules. Pringle claimed that but 55 per cent of the rental was taken as land revenue in Bombay.⁵⁵ Similarly, the insistence that settlement officers work out costs of production and vary the rates according to soils tends to suggest that the 'rental' was assessed properly, and the reductions of land revenue to lower and lower proportions should have reduced the revenue demand per acre.

It is best to remember that these measures for theoretically scaling down the land revenue were accompanied by others that had the opposite effect. The land revenue under the preceding Indian regimes was fixed as a share of the crop, and varied according to the crop cultivated. The land revenue under the British, whether directly imposed on the ryots or assessed on the zamindars, was a true tax on land. The assessment was on the basis of what and how much it ought to produce, not on what crop it actually raised. The Anglo-Indian land tax had, therefore, still less to do with actualities of production than the tax it was replacing. Secondly, the more scientific land surveys increasingly made it impossible for any land to be concealed and so to escape assessment, a feature quite common

under earlier administrations. There were also large-scale resumptions of lands hitherto held revenue-free. Thus the actual incidence of demand per acre would increase simply because of more efficient survey, as well as owing to resumptions. When the notion of fixing the revenue on the basis of 'rents' prevailing between primary cultivators and revenuepayers was increasingly invoked, this too did not help because these 'rents' themselves were determined by the magnitude of land revenue previously in force. Moreover, under Bird in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, and Wingate in Bombay, the practice of first fixing the total demand on an area, and then only undertaking its distribution upon lower units (villages, fields), rendered the assessment liable to be governed by what was assessed previously. Beyond all this was the ability of the Company to collect what had been assessed, an ability to the same degree denied to its predecessors.⁵⁶

Revenue Collection Stepped Up

It is, therefore, essential to consider the total land revenue collections, in order to see whether the fiscal pressure upon the revenuepayers increased or not. Unfortunately, territorial alternations make valueless certain statistics of revenue collections in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces. (or Agra Province). But a comparative statement for the provinces explicitly excluding Banaras, Ghazipur and Jaunpur (permanently settled) and all acquisitions made after 1806-7, puts the total land-revenue demand at Rs 2.10 crores in 1806-7, Rs 3.06 crores in 1819-20, and Rs 3.60 crores in 1829-30, which means an increase of over 70 per cent in 23 years.⁵⁷ A set of figures of actual revenue receipts shows that they rose in the Agra Province from Rs 4.96 crores in 1834-35 to Rs 5.60 crores in 1844-45, an increase of 15 per cent in ten years.⁵⁸ According to another set of figures given by a witness conscious of the effects of territorial changes, the land revenue of the same provinces amounted to £3.33 million in 1826-27 and £3.25 million in 1831-32. "When Mr Bird's settlement was completed, namely in 1846-47", the land revenue came to £3.55 million, signifying an increase of 10.8 per cent over the mean of the figures for 1826-27 and 1831-32.⁵⁹ These statistics suggest an overall increase of about 88 per cent in the land-revenue demand during the forty years following 1806-7. Were we able to consider the statistics for revenue collection for the same period, the increase would be still larger.

The prices during this period increased at the beginning, but became stable after 1818. The following average prices (Rs per maund) of wheat at Farrukhabad are taken from Brij Narain⁶⁰

1801-10	0.91
1811-20	1.13
1821-30	1.21
1831-40	1.33
1841-50	1.03

The price data collected by Asiya Siddiqi for⁶¹ the same region, for the period 1813 to 1840, also broadly discount any possibility of a large increase in prices after 1820: on the contrary, there appears to be a distinct tendency towards depression in wheat prices, and quite a noticeable decline in jowar and bajra. The behaviour of rice prices varied sharply from place to place. It is thus quite obvious that the increase in land revenue in the Ceded and Conquered Provinces was a substantial increase in *real* terms, by nearly as much as 70 per cent during the first half of the nineteenth century, at constant prices.

In Bombay, the land revenue assessments immediately after the annexation (1818) were pushed up to the maximum levels ever reached under the Peshwa's regime.⁶² Pringle's assessments which followed in 1825 were acknowledged to have been devastatingly high⁶³. These methods were supposed to have been moderated by the survey which commenced under Goldsmid and Wingate, in 1835. Yet the moderation did not affect the total collection. In 1837-38 the land revenue collection in Bombay Presidency stood at £1.86 million, a figure that had only once before been exceeded (in 1826-27).⁶⁴ In 1842, it touched £ 2 million.⁶⁵

Decline in Foodgrain Prices

There was no justification for the maintenance of collections of this magnitude in the movements of prices in the Bombay Presidency. With the exception of some years, there was a continuous decline in the prices of jowar and bajra, the staple foodcrops of the region, from 1820 to 1832;⁶⁶ and a very great decline in the prices of foodcrops occurred during the 1840s, the low levels continuing until after 1855.⁶⁷

In the Madras Presidency, settlements were carried out under Sir Thomas Munro during 1820-27. The old assessments had been very heavy, and the new were by no means moderate.⁶⁸ The total land revenue collections in the Madras Presidency amounted to £ 3.79 million in 1819-20 and to £ 3.43 million in 1837-38.⁶⁹ The collections during the next decade increased considerably.⁷⁰ But prices declined substantially over the whole period: the average annual price of common rice was Rs 1.47 per maund in 1819-13, Rs 1.53 in 1819-23, Rs 1.33 in 1828-32, and Rs 1.13 in 1841-53.⁷¹ A set of index numbers of food prices compiled for the Madras Presidency show that with the prices during the decade 1801-02 as base, = 100, the average annual prices during the succeeding decades were 88.5 (1811-12 to 1820-21); 98.2 (1821-22 to 1830-31); 91.4 (1831-32 to 1840-41); and 69.0 (1841-21 to 1850-51).⁷² Thus the total revenue collections in the Madras Presidency appear to have moved in a direction opposite to the movement of prices.⁷³

The general picture, then, is that from about 1820 to 1850, the total revenue collections increased substantially in all the three major zones outside the permanently settled territories. Among these zones the highest increase undoubtedly occurred in the North-Western Provinces (Ceded & Conquered Provinces). The only factor which might relieve the pressure

on the agrarian economy exerted by real taxation on such scale, could be a substantial increase in population, causing a dramatic extension of cultivation and therefore decline in the incidence of land revenue per acre as well as per capita.

"All authorities (!) agree", in the words of a cautious spokesman of the official British view on all matters, "that a great increase [in population] took place between the beginning of the 19th century and the first (but incomplete) census of 1872..."⁷⁴ It is, indeed, true that official or semi-official estimates suggest an increase of population from 134 millions in 1820 to about 255 millions in 1871.⁷⁵ But the wonderful thing about these figures is that they exhibit an almost stable population from 1820 to 1844—indicating, in fact, a decline from 134 millions to 131.8 millions. It is only after 1844 that a dramatic rise occurs, to 151.9 millions in 1852,⁷⁶ 180.9 millions in 1855 and 190.9 millions in 1865, before 255 millions are reached in 1871, a feat only possible at a rate of growth of 5 per cent per annum during the last six years. But as soon as the censuses properly begin, with 1871, there is a sudden fall to a rate of growth of just 0.39 per cent per annum for the next thirty years, the population in 1901 being only 281 millions.

Spurious Demographic Evidence

Davis attempts to deal with this statistical "embarrassment of riches" for the period 1844 to 1871, yielding a rate of increase of about 3 per cent per annum (a demographic mostrosity), by suggesting that the increase is wrongly spaced in the contemporary estimates, and that the earlier estimates are right, but the middle ones are, inexplicably, gross underestimates. "The best policy seems to be...to assume that the population remained at this point (125 million) for one and a half centuries more (after 1600), after which a gradual enhancement of growth began, accelerating as 1870 approached".⁷⁷ This is clearly not an attempt at interpreting the demographic evidence, but at subverting it altogether, in order to maintain one's assumptions about the economic benefits of British rule.

The stability of the population between 1820 and 1850 is quite remarkably corroborated by such detailed districtwise estimates as we have. The population of the Madras Presidency, according to D Kumar's figures, increased only from 13.48 millions in 1823 to 13.97 millions in 1839.⁷⁸ I worked on certain data available for various districts of eastern India and found a *total* increase in population of about 15 per cent between 1812 and 1852, giving a rate of annual increase of about 0.35 per cent at the compound rate.⁷⁹ In the case of both D Kumar's tables and my own, a remarkable increase takes place during the two decades preceding 1871-72.⁸⁰

While all this would be sufficient to rule out a fall in land revenue per capita during 1820-1844, there is the strong probability that the increase between 1844 and 1872 is also ephemeral. In U P (excluding

Oudh), there were fairly efficient censuses conducted in 1853 and 1865. Selecting 10 districts at random, I found a total increase of just 10 per cent during the 19 years between 1853 and 1872, yielding an annual rate of increase of about 0.5 per cent.⁸¹

What seems likely, therefore, is that the estimates and even some of the 'censuses' like the 1847 Census in the N W Provinces, before the 1871-72 Census, gave grossly low figures for the population,⁸² by probably heavily under-enumerating the rural population. As such, the entire evidence becomes suspect. But such as it is, it certainly gives no ground for postulating any increase of population much beyond 15 per cent during the first half of the century, and 10 per cent during the next twenty years: The population of India was probably slightly less than 200 million in 1801 and about 230 million in 1851.⁸³

Impoverishment of the Peasantry

If, then, we consider the actual incidence of land revenue, it becomes clear that by 1850 the basic pillar of British colonialism was still the direct appropriation of the agricultural surplus; and that, unrelieved by any decline in per capita terms, this appropriation was pressing hard upon the producer just as Marx had visualized it.⁸⁴ It is obviously difficult to document the decline in material conditions of life of the peasantry. What one can say from portrayals of the diet of the rural classes of northern India, such as the one quoted by Crawford,⁸⁵ is that the ultimate in poverty had seemingly been reached.

The pressure upon the peasantry was seen by Marx as involving the destruction of the Indian village communities.⁸⁶ Marx had undoubtedly obtained a rather idealized picture of the village community from his reading of some of the official reports. A closer scrutiny suggests, as I have earlier indicated, that the village communities really concealed considerable stratification and the dominance of a body of upper peasants and small zamindars over a number of cultivators and the landless labourers.⁸⁷ As the British sought to maximize land revenue and had far greater power of control, they could disregard the village as a revenue-paying unit in a manner that had been impossible for the earlier regimes.⁸⁸ They could then press upon the upper elements that had so far been favoured with lower rates; and gradually the smaller *muqaddams* of the mahalwari system and the *mirasdars* of Bombay, the kingpins of the old communities, tended to be levelled with the lower strata of the peasantry.⁸⁹ On the other hand it is less easy to consider what happened to the agricultural labourers. In so far as they depended upon wages from the upper peasantry, its woes were naturally passed on to them in an intensified form. At the same time, the weakening of communal control probably enabled certain landless labourers of lower castes to set up as cultivators.⁹⁰ But there is little evidence that this was of more than marginal significance; and where, as in Malabar and Canara, agrestic bondage prevailed, the Act of 1843 had little actual effect in altering the condition of the bondsmen.⁹¹ It is

possible that the population of landless labour increased by emigration of unemployed urban labour; but the evidence for this too has not yet been brought out.

A significant fact, 'quite often missed, is that up till the middle of the eighteenth century, outside the permanently settled regions of eastern India, the pressure upon the zamindars tended to be extremely heavy. The official statements regarding zamindars in the light of proprietors and even conceiving them as allies of British power, had little significance in the actual world of revenue collections. Their position was naturally worst in the mahalwari areas of northern India where the collections had been most relentless. It was officially acknowledged in 1882-83, with reference to the pre-Mutiny assessments that

the proportion of the rental left to the proprietors by the old assessments in the N W Provinces was much less than was absolutely necessary to provide for the support of themselves and their families, bad debts, expenses of management, and vicissitudes of season...It is only since the late revision that they have been left a sufficient margin to live at all and count with certainty on meeting their liabilities to the state.⁹²

Zamindars in Trouble

In one district (Aligarh) 50 per cent of the land changed hands between 1839 and 1858 and 'the moneylending and trading classes' enlarged their share of the landholding of the district, by means of purchases, from 3.4 in 1839 to 12.3 per cent in 1868.⁹³ In another district (Muzaffarnagar), a quarter of the land changed hands between 1841 and 1861, and the proportion of the land held by the 'non-agricultural classes' increased from 11 per cent of the total area in 1840 to 19.5 per cent in 1860.⁹⁴ These conditions remind one of what had happened to the Bengal zamindars immediately after the Permanent Settlement. The sale price of zamindari in private sales and mortgages in the Aligarh district during 1839-48 was but $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the amount of land revenue.⁹⁵ The price relative to land revenue had certainly improved since before 1820s, when it was not even at par.⁹⁶ But this improvement was probably owing to the speculative factor introduced by the 30-year settlement: and the gulf that divided the zamindars of this region and the permanently settled areas is indicated by the fact already noted, that the price of zamindari was 15 times the annual land revenue in Banaras in 1837.

Yet immediately upon the annexation of Oudh in 1855, it was decided to extend to Oudh the selfsame system of the Agra Province, "which had brought unexampled prosperity to that region."⁹⁷ The Mutiny of 1857, which took place in precisely these two regions, must be regarded, in one of its principal aspects, as a peasant revolt led by the *zamindars*, against the main agrarian exploiter, the British regime.⁹⁸

III B

We have said that during the period, about 1800 to 1850, the

colonial objective changed from seizing Indian commodities to seizing the Indian market. The changed objective did not only make the East India Company's monopoly over Indian internal commerce and overseas trade obsolete, but positively required Free Trade. The Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833 largely accomplished this change.

The English exports of manufactures, textiles in the first place, not only practically wiped out the Indian exports of cotton goods, but also entered India to challenge Indian manufactures in their home market. The exports of cotton goods from the United Kingdom to India increased from 0.80 million yards in 1815 to 45.00 million yards in 1830, 51.78 million yards in 1835, and 100.05 million yards in 1839; and cotton twist from a mere 8 lbs in 1814 to 4.56 million lbs in 1828 and 10.81 million lbs in 1839.¹⁰⁰ The value of British cotton goods entering India was £2.29 million in 1839; that of cotton twist was £0.64 million.¹⁰⁰ In 1855 they reached the values, respectively, of £5.40 million and £1.27 million.¹⁰¹ The exports of Indian cotton manufactures declined dramatically. During the decade 1794-95 to 1803-04, the East India Company's sale of Indian piecegoods amounted to £2.42 million annually;¹⁰² in 1849 the value of cotton goods, twist and yarn exported from India was no more than £0.69 million.¹⁰³

Lancashire Captures Indian Market

The effects of these imports of English manufactures upon the largest craft industry of India have often been discussed. Crawford in 1837 disputed the complaint of adverse effects on Indian textile industry by claiming that the British cotton goods imported into India accounted for a mere 6 per cent of the total value of India's domestic textile production.¹⁰⁴ But inasmuch as the competition of British manufactures had also wiped out Indian textile exports of a value of well over £2 million, the total fall in the value of Indian production should have been about 11.5 per cent. Speaking in terms of quantities, the British manufactures seem to have annually furnished 1.2 yards of cloth per Indian family in 1835 and 2.3 yards in 1839.¹⁰⁵ Working back from the estimated Indian per capita consumption of 9.80 yards in 1900-01,¹⁰⁶ and assuming at least a 100 per cent increase in consumption between 1839 and 1900, in view of the relative fall in prices of cotton goods, one arrives at the maximum of 24.5 yards per family per year in 1839. This would mean that British manufactures were supplying as much as 9.4 per cent of the cloth annually consumed in India by 1839. Even if we adjust Ellison's estimate for 1856-60 to our inferences about the size of Indian population at that time, the proportion of Indian cloth consumption supplied by Britain would seem to have risen threefold to over 27 per cent by 1860.¹⁰⁷

Morris has alleged that this vast influx of British cotton goods did not harm India's domestic industry because Indian demand for cloth was "fairly elastic", and there was an increase in cloth consumption arising from "changes in custom". He has also suggested that the import of yarn

strengthened the competitive position of the Indian weaver.¹⁰⁸ These arguments have been dealt with by Bipan Chandra¹⁰⁹ and Meghnad Desai;¹¹⁰ and a few comments here should suffice. While it is true that the low prices of imported manufactures increased the total quantity of the cloth consumed, the further implied assertion that the total *value* of cloth consumed in India also increased substantially, at any rate by a higher percentage than that of the value of imported cloth to previous total consumption, is quite baseless. In the initial phase, with such extreme pressure for tribute, there could hardly have been much scope for demand to expand. On the supply side, Desai has shown that in order to maintain their position against competing British cloth, the Indian weavers, even after shifting to cheaper British yarn needed to increase their productivity by 43 per cent between 1818-21 and 1829-31, unless they accepted a corresponding diminution in their income or wages.¹¹¹ The fact that Indian weavers were being forced to shift to imported twist, in order to survive, is only an argument for the larger destruction of the Indian spinning industry, and hardly one for the prosperity of the Indian weaver. It would seem that initially the British cotton goods mainly hurt the weaving of the fine and medium varieties, and therefore affected the hitherto better situated urban weavers far more than the rural weavers producing coarse cloth for the poorer part of the population.¹¹²

Deindustrialization and Urban Decline

Alongside the cotton goods, English exports to India of iron (bar and bolt as well as cast and wrought), together with hardware and cutlery, guns, glass, and 'machinery', had increased enormously by 1828.¹¹³ They continued to grow during the following years and naturally caused a slump in the corresponding crafts in India.

There was thus ample cause for the 'de-industrialization' of India which marks the second phase of British rule. The urban decline, initiated by the diversion of the surplus from the Indian ruling classes to the Company, spread quite naturally wherever the East India Company's sovereignty extended. It was compounded many times over by the urban unemployment forced by the English manufactures. This urban decline seems not only to have been in relative terms (percentage of urban population to total), but in absolute terms as well. Taking the same districts of eastern India, whose populations I studied for 1812, 1852 and 1872, I found that the populations of eight major towns in those districts had declined from 923,344 around 1812 to 866,749 in 1872.¹¹⁴ Since the towns included Calcutta, the capital of British India, whose population had increased by nearly 270,000 during the period, the overall decline is remarkable. The population of Patna fell from 312,000 in 1812 to 158,900 in 1872;¹¹⁵ and there was no town in Bihar in 1872 which could even remotely be said to approach Patna in population, so that there was no question here of compensatory growth elsewhere. Examples of spectacular decline in populations of individual towns can be multiplied, for example

Dacca, Murshidabad, Lucknow (after annexation, 1855). Detailed regional studies would be necessary before the precise magnitude of the decline in urban population can be indicated; but of the process itself there can be no doubt.

III C

The two-pronged assaults of imperialism, the extraction of tribute and the seizure of the markets of Indian manufactures, could not proceed independently. One reacted on the other.

The difficulty which the extraction of tribute placed in the way of Lancashire's capturing the Indian market was that by denying a large share in the agricultural surplus to classes that could buy the imported wares, it limited the scope of effective demand. An optimistic air with regard to the consequences of Free Trade had pervaded the parliamentary enquiries preceding the Charter Act of 1833. Free Trade and the curbing of the direct and indirect commercial activities of the Company would, it was hoped, unleash a massive and continuous expansion of British exports to India. But in practice, serious lags were encountered within the general process of expansion. Thus the total value of British cotton goods imported in 1849 (£ 2.22 million) proved to be less than the value imported in 1839 (2.29 million).¹¹⁶ Partly, the reason lay in the undeveloped means of transport. But the main factor was that British products had to deal with a severely restricted market labouring under a huge direct economic burden.¹¹⁷

Obstructions to Tribute Realization

Conversely, the deindustrialization of India, as it proceeded, seriously affected the entire mechanism of the transfer of wealth from India to Britain, and raised serious obstructions to the realization of tribute.

Hitherto the realization of tribute from India had taken the form of export of Indian manufactures; and this, as Dundas proclaimed in 1799, was the best thing for everyone. Britain obtained "wealth and capital", and India "prosperity, industry, population and revenue."¹¹⁸ But as "a severe check" was put to these exports by the competition of British manufactures themselves, the happy days of mutual convenience were over. Theoretically, India, losing the markets for manufactures, could have diverted its raw cotton to the English factories. But this proved impracticable, for Indian cotton was too short-stapled for the English factories which came to be supplied mainly from America. A short-lived demand from England after 1815 soon ceased; and only limited quantities could be sent to China.¹¹⁹ The other articles were indigo and silk. As English cloth production expanded, the demand for indigo grew correspondingly. The European agency houses in Bengal flourished on the indigo trade, after the Charter Act of 1813 had brought in the private English merchants. But West Indian competition destroyed the hopes of

continuous expansion of indigo exports; and this brought about the crash of 1832-33, consuming the principal agency houses.¹²⁰ Raw silk, as raw material for English silk-weaving factories, could not similarly compete with Chinese and Italian silk; and its exports remained limited.

By 1830, therefore, the 'realization' problem had become quite acute. It was about this time that the solution was found in opium. During 1816-17 only 3,210 chests of Indian opium had been exported to China; in 1830-31, no less than 18,760 chests; and the value rose from \$ 3.66 to \$ 12.90 million.¹²¹ Opium advanced to the position of the premier article of export of India, exceeding £ 5.7 million in value in 1849 and £ 9.1 million in 1858, easily dwarfing the other items of export, and accounting for nearly a third of the total value of Indian exports.¹²² Under this impetus, the cultivation of poppy during the twenty years preceding 1837 is said to have multiplied fourfold.¹²³ Opium had this merit, that it had hardly any bulk and could be transported from the most distant places inland without the need of roads or railways. Here was 'commercialization' of agriculture without any investment worth the name; and Crawford could only regret that the Company's monopoly should restrict the free expansion of its cultivation and thus sacrifice "a great national advantage."¹²⁴

Indian Opium to China

The "national advantage" (of Britain, of course) lay in the export of this vast quantity of opium to China. The prospects of this commerce seemed limitless as one contemplated the progressive conversion of larger and larger strata of the Chinese people to the newly introduced wonders of the poppy world.¹²⁵ The beauty of the arrangement was that China would in return furnish tea and silk; and thus the tribute would be realized in an enlarged form. In 1855, England consumed tea and silk of China to the value of £ 8.5 million, while exporting a mere £ 1 million worth of goods to that country.¹²⁶ The balance was sheer gain obtained through Indian exports of opium, which in 1855 amounted to £ 6.23 million.¹²⁷

The results of this triangular relationship appear from the trade statistics. Following are the figures for the British imports from, and exports to, Asia (excepting Turkey and the Middle East)¹²⁸ These figures thus show a continuous annual net inflow of imports of 11 to 17 million without any return payment.

Year	Imports	Exports	Re-exports	(in £ 000,000)
				Excess of Imports over Exports
1854	23.0	12.0	0.6	11.0
1855	24.3	13.1	0.5	11.2
1856	29.8	15.4	0.6	14.4
1857	33.8	16.8	0.7	17.0

This indicates the magnitude of the tribute; and tribute was what the Opium Wars of 1840-42 and 1856-58 were about. Any refusal of the Chinese people to consume opium would bring down the entire fabric of tribute-realization that had been built up. This the most powerful-ever Mafia in the world could hardly be expected for a moment to tolerate.¹²⁹

The consequences of the imperialism of the first half of the nineteenth century were that irreconcilable contradictions existed between the imperialist power on the one hand, and the Indian peasantry and artisans on the other; and further that in the relations between imperialism and the zamindars (not yet landlords in any true sense), contradictions held primacy, and accommodation was secondary. Another characteristic of this stage was that the dominance over China had become indispensable for the economic exploitation of India.

IV

About the middle of the nineteenth century, a new stage set in for English capitalism. Capital investment at home reached saturation point with the complete victory of machine industry in every branch of production and the construction of the basic network of railways, the greatest absorbent of capital so far known. Once this point had passed, the export of capital began in earnest. British 'net foreign investment' was already equal in size to 42 per cent of the net domestic capital formation in fixed assets during 1860-69; it went up to 48.5 per cent during 1870-79; and 80 per cent during 1880-89. After a trough during the next decade and a half, it reached 114 per cent during 1905-14.¹³⁰ British capitalism gradually transformed itself into Monopoly Capitalism; and faced by competition from other rising industrial giants, notably Germany and the USA, the international supremacy of British imperialism gave place to a protectionist colonialism, particularly after 1870.¹³¹ These developments characterize the third, and the fullblown phase of British imperialism.

Capital in Reverse Flow

The major new characteristics of this stage were the export of capital and the intensified race for markets. In the case of India, the two aspects were closely interrelated. The capital exported was pre-eminently for railway construction; and the railways enabled Britain to carry her conquest of the Indian market to its maximum extent.

By 31 March 1872 British capital invested in Indian railways at a guaranteed rate of interest (5 per cent per annum) had risen to £ 94.73 million.¹³² In the meantime, the British Indian government also borrowed in London to lay out 'state railways', and so the 'Indian' debt in England mounted from £ 15.09 million in 1858-59 to £ 55.40 million in 1876-77, an increase of £ 40 million,¹³³ "From 1857 to 1865 the major movement of British capital was to India."¹³⁴

While the extraction of tribute continued on the old basis (in 1872 the excess of the value of British imports from Asia over exports thereto

amounted to £ 17.7 million),¹³⁵ here was a partial reversal of the flow of wealth that had so long gone in one direction only. The reversal was, of course, only superficial: The principal and returns on this capital belonged to Britain, and not India, and would only swell, in time, the size of the Indian tribute.¹³⁶

By 1871 the railway mileage in India exceeded 5000 miles; and the main trunk lines to the inland regions had been laid. The mileage approached 10,000 in 1881; and then another spurt in construction took it to 19,555 by 1895. India, perhaps the poorest country in the world, now rivalled the richest in railway mileage. But while in western Europe and America, the railways served as the catalyst of the Industrial Revolution, in India they served as the catalyst of complete colonialization.

The influx of imports from Britain that came on the heels of the railways can be described by citing a few data from trade statistics. The import of cotton manufactures doubled between 1859 and 1877; and rose by nearly half as much again between 1878 and 1887. Imports of silk goods, less than one-fifth in value compared to cotton goods in 1859, rose by about four times between 1859 and 1877, and by 50 per cent again between 1878 and 1887.¹³⁷ Import of wool manufactures similarly increased. The heavier products of British industry, such as metal manufactures (hardware, cutlery, etc.) and machinery and tools now began to be imported in large quantities.

Conquest by Rail

The railways thus helped Britain to retain India still more securely as one of her principal markets. Britain's exports to India accounted for 9.15 per cent of her total exports during the period 1846-55. The proportion was 12.6 per cent in 1876-85.¹³⁸ India's role in sustaining Lancashire's exports was still more significant. In 1849 British export of cloth and yarn to India amounted to 11.7 per cent of total British exports of these items. By 1875 the proportion had risen to 27 per cent.¹³⁹ In so far as capital invested in railways helped to subjugate the Indian market for British industry, it inhibited the export of capital for investment in other sectors. The tariffs were so manipulated as to make India an utterly unprotected economy;¹⁴⁰ and apart from plantations and the jute industry no other branch of the economy could attract British capital with any expectation of high returns.¹⁴¹

The old craft industries could not but have suffered greatly from this onslaught of imports. In 1872 the quantity of cloth imported into India crossed the figure of 1000 million yards; in 1887, of 2000 million yards.¹⁴² In 1900-01, the total Indian production (mill and handloom) barely exceeded 1000 million yards.¹⁴³ Ellison estimated that in 1880-81 Britain supplied as much as 58.4 per cent of the total consumption of cloth in India.¹⁴⁴ By 1887 the proportion must have gone up to much above 66.6 per cent. It is quite likely that by the 1880s the process of deindustrialization had been more or less completed. As Thorner puts it, "the

scope which remained for any subsequent 'de-industrialization' was decidedly limited".¹⁴⁶ But even his rearranged figures from the censuses show a decline in employment in manufacturing, mining, construction and trade, from 18 per cent in 1881 to 16 in 1901.¹⁴⁶

The railways did not simply assist imports by transporting them cheaply. Their ability to furnish exports in return was at the root of the expansion of imports. The entire composition of Indian exports changed as bulk no longer remained a barrier to transport. In 1871 opium was still the principal item, but foodgrains, and raw cotton each closely approached it in total value, and oilseeds were not very far behind. In 1901, foodgrains, raw cotton, jute, and hides and skins had raced ahead of opium, while oilseeds and tea were practically at par with opium in value, though the decline in the value of opium had been less than 25 per cent. The total value of exports had risen between 1878 and 1901 from 67.43 crores to 121.95 crores.¹⁴⁷ There was thus a real shift in Indian agriculture to production of raw materials for England, a shift in relative acreage from foodgrains to non-food crops; ¹⁴⁸ and, of course, an enlargement within the acreage under foodgrains of the portion devoted to crops for export.

Commercialization of Agriculture

This vast change in Indian agriculture (sometimes called 'commercialization') had a polarizing effect on the rural population. As the quantity of food available for the home market declined—and it declined as fast as the railway network extended—famines repeatedly ensued. It had been the expectation of the proponents of the railways that these would help to banish famines, by bringing in supplies. But the very opposite took place: the supplies went out! This is not the place to chronicle the famines, ¹⁴⁹ which has in any case been done often. Suffice it to say that they steadily increased in frequency and scale, culminating in the great famines of 1896-97 and 1899-1900, when millions perished.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, the real wages of agricultural labourers exhibit absolutely no increase over the entire period 1873-1900.¹⁵¹

While the conditions of the poorer peasantry and rural proletariat became more and more critical, the extending production of commercial crops laid the basis for extensive landlord and rich-peasant agriculture. In 1891 the smaller proprietors cultivated 54 per cent of the cultivated area of the Punjab; in 1900, only 45 per cent¹⁵². Writing in 1903, R C Dutt was led to exclaim, "every true Indian hopes that the small cultivation of India will not be replaced by landlordism..."¹⁵³

There was an increase, conversely, in the numbers of the landless labourers. Surendra J Patel has set out the census evidence on this.¹⁵⁴ The evidence is certainly not foolproof: it is as difficult to accept a decline in the relative number of agricultural labourers between 1871-72 and 1891, as it is to accept a doubling of it between 1891 and 1901. But the general trend towards increase is unmistakable. D Kumar in her

study of south India finds that the proportion of agricultural labourers to the total agricultural population increased from 15 or 17 per cent to 27 or 29 per cent during the course of the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁵ The fact that there was probably no important shift of population from the non-agricultural to the agricultural sector between 1881 and 1931¹⁵⁶ does not affect our conclusion at all, because we are postulating a swelling of the ranks of the rural proletariat by influx mainly from the pauperized strata of the peasantry, rather than from unemployed artisans. This situation furnished the setting in which a new basis was laid for the relationship between imperialism and the zamindars.

The abolition of the Company's rule in 1858 was brought about by an alliance of British industrial interests, ever more dominant in Parliament since the Reform Act of 1832. Direct government of India would give both Lancashire and the railway interests a much greater authority over what concerned them in India. Under the new regime the emphasis shifted from the levy of direct tribute through land revenue to the exploitation of India as a market and as a source of raw materials.¹⁵⁷ This change had an immediate impact on the policy of British imperialism towards the zamindars.

Zamindars to Landlords

After the Mutiny, Thornhill, a local officer, urged the government to "throw itself on (the side of) the larger proprietors and repress the peasantry."¹⁵⁸ He was correctly anticipating, or interpreting, the new policy of imperialism. In part this policy was forced upon it by the Mutiny itself, which had shown how dangerous it was to be left without faithful allies. It therefore needed to be proclaimed by the Queen in 1858 that: "We know, and respect the feelings of attachment with which the natives of India regard the land inherited from their ancestors, and we desire to protect them in all rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the state." But the new policy could not have been put into effect had the same dependence of imperialism upon land revenue continued.

There was another factor, too, that greatly helped its implementation. This was a general rise in prices during the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁹ Official price indices cover the period from 1861; but other sources enable us to trace earlier price movements. In the table given on the next page, the figures in columns A and B are calculated from tables in Brij Narain,¹⁶⁰ in column C from Dharma Kumar,¹⁶¹ and in column D from official statistics as presented by M Mukerji.¹⁶² It is clear that foodgrain prices rose about three times between 1850 and 1900.

The increase in prices naturally led to enhancements in rents while the land revenue due to be paid by the zamindars remained stationary for the whole period of the Settlements. Even when new settlements were undertaken, the increase in the assessments in UP was on a very limited

AVERAGE ANNUAL PRICES

Decade	A Coarse Rice: Bengal Rs. per md.	B Wheat: Farrukhabad Rs. per md.	C Common Rice: Madras Rs. per md.	D General Prices: India 1949-50=100
1841-50	1.35	1.03	1.13*	..
1851-60	1.62	1.43
1861-70	2.23	2.22	3.12	15.84
1871-80	2.83	2.11	3.30	16.22
1881-90	2.67	2.67	3.41	15.73
1891-1900	3.65	3.33	4.60	19.18

* Average annual price for 1841-53.

scale, being set far below what would have been justified by the ascent in prices. But in the Bombay Presidency, where it was the peasants mainly, and not zamindars and taluqdars, who paid the revenue, the new settlements in the 1870s were so high as to lead to agrarian disturbances.¹⁶² This was yet another application of the Thornhill principle.

The result of increasing rents and a relatively stationary revenue demand was that the zamindars' share of the 'rental' as compared with the land revenue expanded considerably. The Saharanpur Rule of 50 per cent share of the proprietor now set the minimum rather than the normal or maximum standard. This was the basis of the formal conversion of the zamindar into the modern Indian landlord. The long series of tenancy acts, beginning with the Bengal Rent Act of 1859, merely extended recognition to his new position, and to the subsidence of the bulk of the Indian peasantry into mere tenantry-at-will.

New Classes

The role of usury during this entire process was of considerable significance. Usury had strong roots in the preceding Indian agrarian economy.¹⁶⁴ It now greatly facilitated the subversion of small peasant cultivation and the growth of landlord and rich-peasant agriculture. At the same time, usury was also a parasitical growth feeding upon this very process. The moneylender stood forth as a claimant to a large share of the rural surplus, sometimes even rivalling the landlord. It often suited the British administration to proclaim 'rural indebtedness' as the source of all evil that befell the peasant.¹⁶⁵ But the phenomenal growth of usury was an inseparable aspect of the transformation of the Indian agrarian economy brought about by colonialism itself. To sum up, it was during the second half of the nineteenth century that the modern Indian landlord was created and an alliance formed simultaneously between him and imperialism.

Yet such were the factors inherent in this very phase of imperialism

that it also gave birth to two new classes in Indian society, the bourgeoisie and the industrial proletariat. This was a prospect that Marx had seen when contemplating the projected construction of railways in India.¹⁰ The connection between the changes that Britain wrought in India and the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie has already been so well analysed by R P Dutt, for example, that even the briefest description would be useless repetition. Here at last was the one great "regenerating" effect of colonialism which had so far only pitilessly attacked and shattered a vast, civilized society.

The irreconcilable contradictions that emerged between imperialism and its junior ally, the landlords, on the one hand, and the bulk of the Indian people, including the bourgeoisie, the working class and the peasantry, on the other, laid the seeds of the struggle for national liberation. The whole epoch that followed, spanning the first half of this century and ending with the withdrawal of British imperialism and the parting of the ways of the Indian bourgeoisie and the proletariat, constituted the fourth and final stage of colonialism in India. But it would undoubtedly need a revolution in India before the vestiges and survivals of colonialization are altogether removed.

(This article was originally presented as a paper at a seminar organized by the Tamil Nadu Council for Historical Research at Madras in October 1974.)

¹ Marx's writings on India are conveniently collected together in Marx, *Articles on India*, Second Indian edition, Bombay 1951 (containing an introduction by R P Dutt); and also in K Marx and F Engels, *On Colonialism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. R P Dutt's own *India Today* contains an indispensable elaboration of Marx's views on India.

² *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule*, first published 1901; and *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, first published 1903.

³ M D Morris's original paper, "Towards a Re-interpretation of the 19th Century Indian Economic History", published together with its critiques by T Matsui, Bipan Chandra and T Raychaudhuri in *Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR)*, V No 1; Morris's rejoinder in *IESHR*, V No 4.

⁴ "Distribution of Landed Property in Pre-British India" *Enquiry*, New Series, II, No 3 (1965), pp 21-75; 'Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India', *Enquiry*, N S III, No 3, pp 1-56.

⁵ Holt Mackenzie spoke in his famous minute of July 1, 1819, of "the property (vested in government by immemorial usage) of 10/11 of the net rental of the country." (*Selections from the Revenue Records of the North-West Provinces, 1818-20, Calcutta 1869*, p 62).

⁶ One attempt to do so is made in my paper in *Enquiry*, II, No 3, *op. cit.*

⁷ *Enquiry* N S III, No 3, pp 22 ff.

⁸ See Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay 1963, pp 136-89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 236-40. "In general, throughout Bengal, the rents are paid by the ryots in money" (Sir John Shore, Minute of 18 June 1789, para 226, *The Fifth Report*, Firminger (Ed.) II, Calcutta, 1917, p 54.

¹⁰ *Agrarian System*, *op. cit.* pp 157-59.

¹¹ Cf. Satish Chandra, "Some Aspects of Indian Village Society in Northern India during the 18th Century", *Indian Historical Review*, I, 1, pp 51-64. See also Choksey's

- description of the various strata within the village community (*Economic History of the Bombay Deccan and Karnatak (1818-1861)*, Poona 1945, p 63).
- ¹² *Agrarian System*, *op. cit.*, pp 122-36, 230-36.
- ¹³ *Articles on India*, pp 26-28; *On Colonialism*, pp 35-36; & *Capital I*, Dona Torr (Ed.) pp 350-52.
- ¹⁴ *Agrarian System*, pp 121-22. Cf. D Kumar in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* IV, iii, pp 337-63; also her *Land and Caste in South India*, Cambridge 1965, pp 29ff.
- ¹⁵ P Deane and W A Cole, *British Economic Growth, 1688-1959*, Cambridge, 1962, table on p 87. The figures for 1750-51 are of English imports and exports only.
- ¹⁶ This distinction does not strike many writers on English 18th century colonialism, who tend to speak as if the colonial conquests at that time were also the consequence of a struggle for markets. See for example, E J Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, Pelican Economic History of Britain, Vol III, 1969, p 54: "We defeated them in the East... And we did so for the benefit of *British goods*." (Italics in the original). But see Engels, Letter to Conrad Schmidt, 1890," extract in Marx, *Articles on India*, p 97.
- ¹⁷ Shore, Minute of 18 June 1789, para 68, *Fifth Report*, Firminger (Ed.) II, 18.
- ¹⁸ R C Dutt, *Economic History of India under Early British Rule*, (6th London edn.) pp 46, 69. Figures reconverted from sterling at £ 1 = Rs 10.
- ¹⁹ W Hunter, *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, 1897, p 39.
- ²⁰ "Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Finances of Bengal" April, 1786, in *Fifth Reports*, II, pp 159-477. Grant sums up his views on pp 159-60, when he says that there was a "defalcation" of half a crore of rupees yearly in the Northern Circars, and two crores in Bengal, i. e. the Company could raise its collections further by these sums. See also his table on p 476. Cf. also Grant's *Political Survey of the Northern Circars, 1784-1786*, *Fifth Report*, Firminger (Ed.) III, pp 1-118.
- ²¹ Cornwallis sounds the alarm upon "the consequences of the heavy drain of wealth" being severely felt and "the langour which has thereby been thrown upon the cultivation and commerce of the country" and declares that unless its "inhabitants" (read, zamindars) were given "some prospects of private advantage to themselves", they could not be expected to exert themselves. This was necessary to enable Bengal "to continue to be a solid support to British interests", i. e. to continue to furnish tribute (Cornwallis, Minute of 3 February 1790, *Fifth Report*, II, p 542).
- ²² Ranajit Guha, *A Regime of Property for Bengal*, Paris.
- ²³ Shore, Minute of 18 June 1789, *Fifth Report*, II, pp 27-29.
- ²⁴ N K Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, II, Calcutta 1962, pp 177-78.
- ²⁵ Brij Narain, *Indian Economic Life, Past and Present*.
- ²⁶ N K Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, II, pp 177, 223. For the entry of merchants and bankers into the ranks of zamindars in the Banaras region, another permanently settled area, see B Cohn, *In Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, R E Frykenburg (Ed.), pp 80-84. This does not of course, mean that all or even most of the new zamindars (the auction-purchasers and other buyers) were bankers and merchants (Cf. Ratna Ray, *IESHR*, XI, I, pp 1-2).
- ²⁷ N K Sinha, *op. cit.*, p 223: "Cornwallis succeeded in diverting native capital to land."
- ²⁸ James Grant, in *Fifth Report*, II, p 281.
- ²⁹ H Furber, *John Company at Work*, Cambridge, Mass., 1951, pp 112-16.
- ³⁰ Deane & Cole, *British Economic Growth*, table on p 87.
- ³¹ See table in B R Mitchell and P Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, p 311.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ On the nature of official valuation, see Deane & Cole, *op. cit.*, pp 42-43, 315-17. When converted into real prices, the total value of British imports in 1797-98 rises from £244 million to 43.1 million (*ibid.*, table on p 44).
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 44-45.
- ³⁵ Grant in *Fifth Report*, II, p 276. He put the agricultural produce of Bengal alone at Rs 21 crores annually.

- ³⁶ Shore, *Fifth Report*, II, p 27, estimated it at 8.51 crores.
- ³⁷ Based on Grant's table, *Fifth Report*, II, p 476.
- ³⁸ *Fifth Report*, II, p 276.
- ³⁹ *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, Nawal Kishore (Ed.), II, pp 836-37, 840-41.
- ⁴⁰ J B Tavernier, *Travels in India, 1640-67*, translated by Ball, 2nd edn. revised by W Crooke, London, 1925, II, p 2. Of the silk, a third remained in Bengal, a third sent to other parts of India and the Middle East, and a third sent to Europe through the Dutch.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Grant in *Fifth Report*, II, p 276.
- ⁴³ Deane & Cole, *op.cit.*, pp 161, 166, 281-2. The National Income estimate for 1801 is really an estimate of National Product and is also described as such by Deane & Cole.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p 263. Cf. also F Crouzet (Ed.), *Capital Formation in the Industrial Revolution*, London 1972, p 15 & n.
- ⁴⁵ Cf. Deane & Cole, pp 34-35, who offer extremely inconclusive remarks on the whole question.
- ⁴⁶ Deane and Cole, pp 263-64; Crouzet, *op.cit.*, p 15 & n.
- ⁴⁷ Kuznets, cited in Crouzet, p 15 n.
- ⁴⁸ Deane and Cole, pp 185, 187.
- ⁴⁹ Cornwallis, Minute of 3 February 1790, *Fifth Report*, II, p 541.
- ⁵⁰ Thomas Munro's Report, 15 August 1807, in *Fifth Report*, III, pp 501-2.
- ⁵¹ The outstanding study of the utilitarian views in respect of Indian land revenue and agrarian economy is by Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*, Oxford 1959, pp 81-139.
- ⁵² I rely upon Brij Narain's series of prices of coarse rice in Bengal. The average annual price during 1800-1809 was Rs 1.05 per md.; 1810-19, Rs 1.22; during 1820-29, Rs 1.66; and during 1830-39, Rs 1.43. This trend was not confined to Bengal or to rice. The price of wheat at Farrukhabad (UP) was on an average Rs 0.91 per md. during 1801-10, and Rs 1.13 during 1811-20, Rs 1.21 during 1821-30, and Rs 1.33 during 1831-40 (Brij Narain, *Indian Economic Life, Past and Present*, Lahore 1929, pp 113-114).
- ⁵³ Out of the 'farmers' rent' of Rs 11.75 lacs collected in the Court of Ward estates throughout Bengal, govt. revenue accounted for 5.74 lacs; the remainder, Rs 6.01 lacs, formed the 'Zamindar's Profit'. Statement furnished by Holt-Mackenzie, *Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, Colonies: East India*, 9, Irish University Press, p 255.
- ⁵⁴ B. Cohn in *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, R E Frykenburg (Ed.), Madison 1969, p 112.
- ⁵⁵ E Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India, op.cit.*, p 134.
- ⁵⁶ In 1838-39, the amount assessed in the North-Western Provinces (old Ceded & Conquered Provinces) was Rs 4.6 crores, the collection Rs 3.6 crores. In 1847-48, the respective figures were Rs 4.3 & 4.2 crores. (R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, London 1950, p 46. The figures have been reconverted at £1=Rs 10).
- ⁵⁷ *Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, Colonies: East India*, 9, IUP Appendix, pp 4-5.
- ⁵⁸ *Parliamentary Papers, 1852, Colonies: East India*, 12, IUP pp 481-2. Figures for subsequent years are not comparable because of the addition of Cis-and-Trans-Sutlej Territories in 1846-47.
- ⁵⁹ *Parliamentary Papers, 1871, Colonies: East India*, 19, IUP, p 84.
- ⁶⁰ *Indian Economic Life, Past and Present*, pp 113-14.
- ⁶¹ A Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change in a North Indian State*, Oxford 1973, pp 187-94.
- ⁶² R D Choksey, *Economic History of the Bombay Deccan and Karnatak (1818-1868)*, Poona, 1945, pp 24-25. The land-revenue collection, Rs 0.69 crores in 1817-18 was pushed up to Rs 1.82 crores by 1820-21. (R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 65).
- ⁶³ Its results were thus described by the Administrative Report of the Bombay Presidency (1872): "Numbers abandoned their homes and fled into the neighbouring

states. Large tracts of land were thrown out of cultivation; and in some districts no more than a third of the cultivable area remained in occupation." (Quoted, Choksey *op. cit.*, p 92 n).

- ⁶⁴ R C Dutt, *Economic History of India under Early British Rule*, pp 403-5.
- ⁶⁵ *Parliamentary Papers, 1871, Colonies: East India*, 19, IUP, p 8.
- ⁶⁶ Choksey, *op.cit.*, pp 93-94.
- ⁶⁷ Statement of Prices at Bombay, Poona, Belgaum and Ahmedabad (1824-1863) for wheat, jowar, rice, ghi and firewood, in *Parliamentary Papers, 1871, Colonies: East India*, 19, IUP, pp 617-18.
- ⁶⁸ The conclusions Nilmani Mukherjee arrives at, after a detailed study of the economic consequences of the ryotwari arrangements during the period 1792-1827, are: "The high assessments caused great suffering to the ryots. There was a marked shrinkage in the volume of agricultural output." (*Ryotwari System in Madras, 1792-1827*, Calcutta 1962, p 313).
- ⁶⁹ R C Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp 403-5.
- ⁷⁰ D Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India*, Cambridge 1965, p 114, says the annual average collection of land revenue during the first ten years of the 19th century was Rs 384 lakhs, and in the decade ending 1849-50, Rs 395 lakhs (the decimal points placed in these figures in Kumar are obvious misprints). The figures for the last decade represented full recovery from a decline that had occurred during the preceding two decades. Rs 10 were then worth £ 1.
The acquisition of the small principality of Karnul in 1842 could not have had a more than marginal effect on the total revenue collections of the entire Presidency.
- ⁷¹ Kumar, *op.cit.*, p 91.
- ⁷² A Sarada Raju's table & index (unweighted) in her *Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency, 1801-50*, Madras 1941, pp 228-29. The averages for decades have been calculated by me from her index. Cf. D Kumar, *op.cit.*, p 84: From the table of Index Numbers of Food Prices reproduced by her, it can be seen that the average price for the years 1841-42 to 1850-51 was only 66.5, when the 1616-25 prices are taken as base, = 100.
- ⁷³ Other evidence for the heavy incidence of land revenue in the Madras Presidency during the first half of the 19th century is furnished in A Sarada Raju, *op.cit.*, pp 49-52.
- ⁷⁴ V Anstey, *The Economic Development of India*, London 1957, p 38. The first edition of her work appeared in 1929.
- ⁷⁵ D & B Bhattacharya, *Census of India, 1961: Report on the Population Estimates of India*. See also Kingsley Davis, *Population of India and Pakistan*, Princeton 1951, p 25. Davis's figure for 1800 in his table of contemporary estimates is really his own, having practically nothing to do with the figure given by the source from which it is ostensibly abstracted.
- ⁷⁶ *British Parliamentary Papers, 1852, Colonies: East India* 12, IUP, pp 334-39. The other figures are abstracted from D & B Bhattacharya, *op.cit.*
- ⁷⁷ K Davis, *op.cit.*, p 26. The figure for 1600 is Davis's own revision of Moreland's estimate (itself weakly based) of 100 million. The latest estimate for 1600 is 144 million. (Shireen Moosvi in *IESHR X 2*, pp 180-95).
- ⁷⁸ D Kumar, *op.cit.*, 120-121.
- ⁷⁹ Note on Indian Population, 1800-1872 (unpublished) presented at the seminar on the Colonization of the Indian Economy, Aligarh, 1972, table I.
- ⁸⁰ The year after 1839 for which Kumar offers figures is 1851-52, with population at 22.01 millions, growing to 31.60 millions in 1871. My table showed a similar increase from a population of 19.60 millions c. 1852, to 31.14 millions in 1872.
- ⁸¹ See my Note, *op.cit.*, table II.
- ⁸² When the 1868 Census of Oudh (part of the 1871-72 Census) returned a population of 11.22 million, the confession was made that "we (had) always underestimated it, and nobody imagined that the population was so dense till there was a regular census

- taken." (*Parliamentary Papers, 1871, Colonies: East India*, 19, IUP p 98).
- ⁵⁸ This fits in with M Mukerji's revision of the official population figure for 1856 to 227 million, by multiplying the original figure by 1.256, the factor implied in Davis's revision of the 1871 Census, on account of underestimation and incomplete geographical coverage (M Mukerji in *Economic History of India, 1857-1950*, V B Singh, (Ed.) Bombay 1965, pp 667-8). It is not clear, however, whether the 1856 estimate had overlooked the areas excluded by the 1871 Census.
- ⁸⁴ Rent, says Marx, "may assume dimensions which seriously imperil reproduction of the conditions of labour, the means of production themselves, rendering the expansion of production more or less impossible and reducing the direct producers to the physical minimum of the means of subsistence. This is particularly the case when this form is met with and exploited by a conquering commercial nation, e.g. the English in India." *Capital* III, Moscow, 1959, pp 776-7). See also Marx's article of July 19, 1853, reprinted in *On Colonialism*, pp 72-75.
- ⁹⁵ John Crawford, in *The Economic Development of India under the East India Company, 1814-58*, R N Chaudhuri (Ed), Cambridge 1971, p 234. The description is of the year 1826. Speaking of "the food of the lower classes in the villages" of Hindustan, the observer says, "their earnings rising only from 4s. to 6s. (Rs 2 to 3) per mensem, forces a recourse to the vilest food. The more scrupulous castes are obliged to mix with coarse grains above mentioned wild roots, herbs and insects; while the outcastes as the numerous race of Chumars, Kanjars, Dusads, etc., scruple not to eat vermin, dead fish, carrion, etc."
- ⁸⁰ *Articles on India*, p 21; *On Colonialism*, p 36.
- ⁸⁷ See Section I of this article.
- ⁸⁸ Cf. *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, pp 230-36.
- ⁸⁹ For the *mahalkwari* areas, see A Siddiqi, 108-9. For the opposite view, see Sulekh C Gupta in *Contributions to Indian Economic History* I, T Raychaudhuri (Ed.) Calcutta 1960, pp 21-45: This is not the place to discuss his arguments; but it seems to me, he gives inadequate attention to the realities of the revenue pressure, and the actual behaviour of prices in suggesting that the intermediaries and the upper strata strengthened themselves during this period. For the fate of the *mirasdars*, see Choksey, *op.cit.*, pp 115 ff.
- ⁹⁰ Cf. A Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change in a North Indian State*, pp 112-13; Nilmani Mukherjee, *The Ryotwari System in Madras, 1792-1827*, pp 295-96.
- ⁹¹ D Kumar, *op.cit.*, pp 74-76.
- ⁹² Administration Report of N W Provinces, 1882-83, quoted in E Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India*, p 133.
- ⁹³ E Stokes in *Elites in South Asia*, E Leach and S N Mukerjee (Eds.), Cambridge 1970, p 20.
- ⁹⁴ E T Atkinson, *Statistical &c., Account of the North-Western Provinces of India*, III Meerut Division, part ii. Allahabad, 1876, p 552.
- ⁹⁵ *Idid.*, II, Meerut Division, part i, Allahabad 1875, p 469.
- ⁹⁶ *Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, Colonies: East India*, 9, IUP, Appendix, pp 152-53. The figures are given for the Ceded and Conquered Provinces for the years 1817-18, 1818-19 and 1819-20.
- ⁹⁷ Jagdish Raj in *Contributions to Indian Economic History* I, Tapan Raychaudhuri (Ed.) Calcutta 1960, p 50.
- ⁹⁸ Cf. however 'Talmiz Khaldun' in *Rebellion: 1857, a Symposium*, P C Joshi (Ed.), Delhi 1957, p 52, where the Mutiny is characterized as "a peasant war against indigenous landlordism and foreign imperialism". The best discussion of the agrarian elements in the Mutiny is by E Stokes in *Elites of South Asia*, pp 16-32. Cf. also Sulekh-chandra Gupta in *Enquiry*, 1, pp 69-98. Any full characterization of the Mutiny must include a definition of the role of the unemployed urban artisans and the sepoys of the Bengal Army, a modern force in an otherwise medievalist upsurge.
- ⁹⁹ *British Parliamentary Papers: East India Company Affairs, Colonies: East India* 8, Irish

- University Press, pp 511 & 517. Meghnad Desai, *IESHR* VIII No 4, pp 346-49, based on J MacGregor (1848).
- ¹⁰⁰ M Desai in *IESHR*, VIII, 4, p 349.
- ¹⁰¹ R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 161.
- ¹⁰² I Durga Parshad, *Some Aspects of Indian Foreign Trade, 1757-1893*, London 1932, p 212 (table).
- ¹⁰³ R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 162.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Economic Development of India under the East India Company*, K N Chaudhuri (Ed.) Cambridge 1971, pp 239-42.
- ¹⁰⁵ For the quantities of British cotton manufactures exported to India in 1835 and 1839 see the preceding paragraph. I have assumed the Indian population to have been roughly 215 million and each family to consist of 5 persons.
- ¹⁰⁶ H Fukazawa in *Economic History of India, 1857-1956*, V B Singh (Ed.) p 238 (table).
- ¹⁰⁷ Ellison estimated the proportions to be 3.9% in 1831-35 and 35.3% in 1856-60. He assumed the population to be 150 million and 182 million in the respective years, and fixed Indian cloth consumption at 21 lb. per capita. (Cited by Desai, *IESHR* VIII, 4, pp 353-4). It is likely that cloth consumption, estimated at 21 lb. during 1860s, was much less thirty years earlier. In that case, Ellison's original estimate of the share of Indian cloth consumption supplied by Britain might really be the right one.
- ¹⁰⁸ *IESHR* V, I, pp 8-9.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 52-63.
- ¹¹⁰ *IESHR* VIII, 4, pp 317-61.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 358. Such an increase in productivity was, of course, impossible without technological innovation. Thus the result was an enormous fall in the income of the weaver. According to the District Collectors' reports, "in Vizagapatam, the price of Punjum cloth of the Company's assortment fell from Rs 6 per piece in 1815 to Rs 3-8-0 in 1844, and the profits of the weaver from 1 or 2 rupees to 8 or 4 annas. In Bellary, prices in the case of the inferior varieties diminished by 35%, and the net income by 75%." (A Sarada Raju, *Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency, 1800-1850* p 180). 1 Rupee = 16 annas.
- ¹¹² Cf. D R Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times*, London 1944, p 43.
- ¹¹³ Statistics showing the increase between 1814 and 1828 are given in *Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, Colonies: East India*, 8, p 511.
- ¹¹⁴ Note on Indian Population, 1800-72, *op. cit.*, table III.
- ¹¹⁵ A census of 1837 put its population at 284,132. See Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, XI, pp 32-34.
- ¹¹⁶ For the 1839 figure see M Desai, *IESHR* VIII, 4, p 349; for 1849, see R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 161.
- ¹¹⁷ Cf. Karl Marx, "The East India Company" (1853), *Articles on India* p 50; *On Colonialism*, pp 48-9.
- ¹¹⁸ He added prophetically: "The manufactures of that country would be reduced to very deplorable circumstances if any severe check was to be given to the usual investment and exports from India." *A Selection from the Despatches, Treaties, & Other Papers of the Marquess Wellesley*, K G, S J Owen (Ed.) London 1877, p 697.
- ¹¹⁹ N K Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal*, III, Calcutta 1970, pp 14-17; A Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, pp 153-56, cotton prices on pp 190, 192-3. Cf. R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, pp 131-2.
- ¹²⁰ See the account in A Tripathi, *Trade & Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833*. Calcutta, 1956; and S B Singh, *European Agency House in Bengal*, Calcutta 1966.
- ¹²¹ *Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, Colonies: East India*, 9, I U P, p 250. Cf. also *Ibid.*, 8, pp 512-13.
- ¹²² R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, table on p 162. Cf. table on value of imports and exports on p 160. See also table of commodity composition of Indian exports, 1814-15 to 1857-58 (selected years) given by K N Chaudhuri in

- Economic Development & c., op. cit.*, p 26.
- ¹²⁸ Crawford in *Economic Development, & c.*, p 251.
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 251-2.
- ¹²⁵ *Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, Colonies: East India*, I U P, p 251 (Q No. 2190).
- ¹²⁶ Thomas Toke in *Economic Development, & c.*, p 171.
- ¹²⁷ R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 162. In 1836-37 India had exported to China goods of the value of Rs 6.72 crores and imported to the value of Rs 0.53 crore in goods and 1.24 crores in treasure, leaving a favourable balance of Rs 4.96 crores. The balances were smaller in the next two years (K N Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, table on p 49). It ought to be borne in mind that Indian customs house figures for exports at this time used to be gross under-valuations (Crawford, *op. cit.*, pp 245-6).
- ¹²⁸ B R Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, Cambridge 1962, p 318.
- ¹²⁹ Cf. Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, 1st Indian edn. pp 188-89, for a passage written in 1880 and containing an indignant criticism of the Opium Trade as an infamous form of realization of the Indian tribute.
- ¹³⁰ Deane and Cole, p 266 (table).
- ¹³¹ Cf. M Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, London 1947, pp 311-12.
- ¹³² R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 359.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp 373-74.
- ¹³⁴ L H Jenks, *The Migration of British Capital, to 1875*, London 1963, p 207; quoted in A G L Shaw (Ed.) *Great Britain and the Colonies, 1815-1865*, London 1971, p 21.
- ¹³⁵ Mitchell and Deane, *op. cit.*, p 318. The excess in value of Indian exports over imports in trade with all countries in 1871 was almost the same, viz. £ 17.6 million (R C Dutt *op. cit.*, pp 343-44).
- ¹³⁶ The burden was increased substantially also because the guaranteed capital was so wastefully employed. According to Dadabhai Naoroji (*Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, p 121; also p 31), the annual drain of wealth from India to Britain increased from £ 8.7 million during 1855-59 to £ 31 million during 1870-72. While Naoroji certainly stood on the right side of the barricades, the principles on which he based his calculations are not above criticism (cf. Bipan Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, New Delhi 1966, pp 645-48). The large increase in the annual drain exhibited in Naoroji's figures is partly to be explained by the exceptional capital-flow to India during the late 1850s and early 1860s, which reduced the excess of Indian exports over imports during that period, and so concealed the real size of the Indian tribute.
- ¹³⁷ See tables in R C Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp 345, 530.
- ¹³⁸ These calculations have been made from the statistical tables given in Mitchell & Deane, pp 283, 324-5.
- ¹³⁹ Based on tables of imports into India in R C Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp 161, 345, and tables of British exports in Mitchell & Deane, 303-4. It would have been better to take both sets of figures from British trade statistics. But the result is unlikely to be very different. M Desai estimates the share of India (in Britain's total textile export) to have been 15% during 1821-30 and 30% during 1871-80 (*IESHR* VIII, 4, p 339).
- ¹⁴⁰ The classic account is in R C Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp 401-16, 537-44.
- ¹⁴¹ Of a total of £ 365.3 million of British capital invested in India by 1909-10, government debt accounted for £ 182.4¹ million, railways and other transport for £ 141.5 million and plantations for 24.2 million. Investments in electricity and power, &c., minerals and oil, and commerce and industry, all together, amounted to no more than £ 12.7 million. (Sir George Paish's estimate, adapted and cited by Arun Bose in V B Singh (Ed.) *Economic History of India, 1857-1956*, p 494).
- ¹⁴² Desai in *IESHR* VIII, 4, p 351 (table).
- ¹⁴³ Amiya K Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-1939*, Cambridge 1972, p 226 (table.)

- ¹⁴⁴ Desai in *IESHR* VIII, 4, pp 353-4.
- ¹⁴⁵ Daniel and Alice Thorner, *Land and Labour in India*, Bombay 1962, p 77.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.78-79 (table).
- ¹⁴⁷ R C Dutt, *op.cit.*, tables on pp 529 & 533.
- ¹⁴⁸ See tables in B M Bhatia *op.cit.*, p 224, & Amiya K Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-1939*, Cambridge 1972, p 95. The tables relate to the last decade of the 19th century and the earlier years of this century. Agricultural statistics of this kind are not available for earlier periods.
- ¹⁴⁹ A chronologicable table is furnished by Bhatia, p 343.
- ¹⁵⁰ Bhatia, pp 242, 250, 261.
- ¹⁵¹ M Mukerji in V B Singh (Ed.), *Economic History of India, 1857-1956* pp 678-9 (table); Bhatia, pp 349-51 (tables). D Kumar finds a substantial decline in real wages of agricultural labourers in the Madras Presidency between 1875 and 1900 (*op.cit.*, pp 165-67).
- ¹⁵² R C Dutt, *op. cit.*, p 471.
- ¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp 518-19.
- ¹⁵⁴ S J Patel, *Agricultural Labourers in India and Pakistan*, Bombay 1952, pp 1-20.
- ¹⁵⁵ D Kumar, *op.cit.*, pp 168-82. She declines to see in this increase a "radical transformation of the agrarian economy".
- ¹⁵⁶ D and A Thorner, *Land and Labour in India*, pp 70-81
- ¹⁵⁷ Marx summed up the divergence between the old and new 'lines' of imperialism in his reference, in 1853, to a parliamentary speech of Bright, "whose picture of India ruined by the fiscal exertions of the Company did not, of course, receive the supplement of India ruined by Manchester and Free Trade" (*Articles on India*, p 36; *On Colonialism*, p 29.)
The ambitions of Lancashire with regard to India were given full expression during the parliamentary controversy over the renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1853. The construction of railways was a major plank in the Manchester programme for India, and the guarantee system for railway capital was vigorously supported (R J Moore, "Imperialism and Free Trade Policy in India, 1853-1854", A G L Shaw, (Ed.) *Great Britain and the Colonies, 1815-1865*, pp 184-96).
- ¹⁵⁸ Quoted by E Stokes in *Elites in South Asia*, p 25.
- ¹⁵⁹ Cf. D R Gadgil, *Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times*, London 1942, pp 21-22.
- ¹⁶⁰ Brij Narain, *Indian Economic Life: Past and Present*. The movement of wheat prices at Farrukhabad is corroborated by the detailed price-data for Meerut collected and analysed by Toru Matsui in *Memoirs of the Institute of Oriental Culture*, University of Tokyo, No 64. March 1970, pp 97 ff. (tables). Toru Matsui's prices begin from 1845, or more often, 1848.
- ¹⁶¹ D Kumar, *op. cit.*, p 91 (table).
- ¹⁶² M Mukerji in V B Singh (Ed.) *Economic History of India 1857-1958*, p 685 (tables)
Cf. tables of prices from the same source in Bhatia, p 348.
- ¹⁶³ Cf. A Colvin's Memorandum of 8 November 1875, extracts quoted in R C Dutt, *op.cit.* pp 330-32.
- ¹⁶⁴ See my article, "Usury in Medieval India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, The Hague, VI, 4, pp 394-98.
- ¹⁶⁵ Cf. Bipan Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, p 466 and n.
- ¹⁶⁶ K Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India" (1853), *Articles on India*, pp 70-72; *On Colonialism*, pp 79-81.

NOTES

Class Character of the Indian Constitution

A study of the Constitution of India is an eye-opener, allaying any doubt about its class character and helping to identify the ruling class which brought it into being.

Broadly, but only in a formal sense, world constitutions may be classified into two types: the written and the unwritten. It was with the entry of the bourgeoisie into the corridors of power that they began to frame constitutions and put them down in black and white.¹ The laws of the land, including constitutional law, pertain to a society's superstructure: the legal system is a pale reflection of society itself. The superstructure derives its traits from the economic base, namely ownership of the means of production and relations of production.

The base and superstructure are always in a process of dialectical interaction: a written constitution mirrors this process. For example, "as one ruling class is displaced by another there is a change of constitutions"² which represents a radical transformation in economy and polity. A change of the basic law in itself, however, does not mean the emergence of a new ruling class: between 1783 and 1949 the French Republic had fourteen constitutions but it was one class, the bourgeoisie, which was entrenched in power throughout this period.

Even while the same class continues to hold the reins of power, shifts in the balance of forces find expression in new constitutions or in amendments to the old. There are, however, limitations to the high-fidelity of this kind of transmission. Constitutions are incapable of faithfully representing social realities because of their formalistic and sometimes pious and fictitious professions and legalistic jargon. At best they may reflect a part of the reality at the time of drafting or enactment. With the passage of time changes take place and constitutions fail either to register or keep pace with them. The impediments to constitutional changes are highlighted by the built-in rigidity such as the requirement of a two-thirds or three-fourths majority for making the slightest alteration in the written word. It is when legal relations established by the constitution become outdated and no amendments can be carried out to correct anomalies, that the system is locked in an impasse. This is

especially true of written constitutions of bourgeois states which defend the interests and consolidate the domination of the capitalowners. Resistance will be stiff in the face of any threat to these interests. The principal barrier to constitutional changes is this opposition emanating from the powers that be.

The Constitution of India which came into force on 26 January 1950 was framed by a Constituent Assembly of over 300 members. In the leading bourgeois democracies of the Western world, the fathers of the constitutions had been largely those directly elected by the people. In India, there was a departure from precedents: the Constituent Assembly members were elected indirectly and by a minority of the population.

The provincial legislatures sent the men to Delhi who put the constitution on the anvil. As the Assembly rules permitted double membership, 106 provincial legislators concurrently did law-making at both the provincial and national capitals. The rest of the Assembly was made up of nominees of the provincial legislatures who gave undivided attention to the job of constitution-making in New Delhi.

By the Few, for the Few

Members of the provincial legislatures were elected in 1946 on a limited franchise under the Government of India Act of 1935 which excluded the mass of peasants, workers, and small shopkeepers and traders from the electoral roll on the norms of tax payment, property holding and educational qualifications. Only 28.5 per cent of the adult population had voting rights in 1946. The unrepresentative character of the Constituent Assembly is further evident from the conspicuous absence of communists or socialists from its benches.

The Congress party was in full control with an overwhelming majority. It has been said that the leading foursome, Nehru, Patel, Prasad and Azad, in fact constituted an oligarchy within the Assembly.⁸ It was the Congress Party's Experts Committee, headed by Nehru, which directed the operations. Eight different committees were set up, under the chairmanship of Congressmen mostly, to shape parts of the document.

The ruling party had its own problems which beset the historic task of hammering out a constitution for the country. Because of its organizational peculiarities and ideological vagueness, the Congress Party was at a loss in formulating precise ideas and principles of the democracy which it had been promising throughout the struggle for independence. In general, it wanted to have a parliamentary system, a politically centralized but culturally diversified federal structure and a dynamic social order. All these meant different things to different members of the Congress Party.

The real dilemma is described in the following terms:

The greatest problem before the Constituent Assembly in the post-partition era was economic in nature. An industrial revolution had

already set in, producing a consequential class contradiction. Largely fed by the financial assistance of the propertied classes, the Congress had to meet the demands of private property, paying at the same time equal attention to the amelioration of the conditions of the poor workers and peasants which in this underdeveloped country had already become unbearable.⁴

The paymasters of the ruling party won the day. Confronted with a steamroller majority against them, the dissenting voices had no chance beyond being heard on the floor of the House. There were no concessions either to the Muslim League or the Akali Dal in the demand for a loose federation. There was a sense of outrage when suggestions arose to declare India a "socialist republic". The very word evoked hostility and the preamble stopped with two attributes for the Indian republic, "sovereign and democratic".

Although the Constitution of the Soviet Union was available for inspection, the Constituent Assembly found it too uninspiring to take any serious notice of. The Indian Constitution borrowed generously from the Government of India Act 1935, (a legacy of the British raj) and the constitutions of capitalist countries such as USA, UK, Australia, Canada and Ireland. Thus the very process of constitution-making left no doubt about the bias of the authors. The product of their labours bears the indelible stamp of its class origin.

Safeguards for Landlords and Monopolists

The economic concepts incorporated in the constitution deserve special attention exposing as they do the class bias beyond any shadow of a doubt. Article 19 (1) (f) declares the right of all citizens to acquire, hold and dispose of property. Although subject to the restrictions imposed in Article 19 (5) the fact remains that, as a fundamental right, the right to private property to any extent has been invested with legal sanctity.

According to Article 31, individuals may be deprived of their property if a competent legislature enacts a law to that effect. Compulsory expropriation by the state is also permitted with the proviso that the owner is entitled to compensation. While the constitution does not spell it out, the Supreme Court, until recent times, has construed the quantum of compensation as equivalent to the full market value of the property in question. The propertied classes lost nothing in the bargain.

The Congress Party was committed long before independence to the abolition of landlordism. After independence, the Constituent Assembly witnessed prolonged debates and heated discussions on whether full compensation should be paid to the landlords. Contrary to all expectations, the landlords got away with their pound of flesh. The feudal rulers of the erstwhile Indian states were also assured the safety and security of their personal wealth: in return for the accession of their territories to the Union of India, the princes also received handsome rewards in the form of "privy purse" private incomes. For twenty five years after independence,

the feudal chieftains received their privy purse income without let or hindrance from the Government of India.

It is interesting to note that the constitution-makers, well aware of the working of the capitalist economy, forestalled the monopolistic tendency as an inevitable concomitant of the system. But all they did was to place a provision in the Chapter on Directive Principles. Article 39 (b) and (c) read as follows:

The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing...

- (b) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;
- (c) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment.

These being nothing more than directive principles, there are no real sanctions against the concentration of wealth. As long as the bourgeoisie retains political power, these declarations will remain as mere moral precepts devoid of any meaning or force, as the ruling class will not even raise its little finger either to prevent economic power concentration and monopoly growth, or to take over the ownership and control of the country's material resources for general welfare. The Indian Constitution thus accords full endorsement to the capitalist economy in unequivocal terms.

Fundamental Rights

Private property is anchored in the Constitution of India. It is a wonder that it provided for the right of a person, whose property in a suit was of the value of Rs 20,000 or more, to lodge an appeal with the Supreme Court against a High Court decision, irrespective of whether a substantial question of law was involved. This provision stood in the document until it was amended in 1972. Making sure that interests of the propertied classes are promoted and consolidated and the legal system adapted for the uninterrupted march of capitalism in India, the preamble to the constitution indulges in platitudes such as:

We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation...

It is difficult to see what the people of India have to do with all this high-sounding rigmarole!

Part III of the constitution gives a list of the so called 'Fundamental Rights.' These are, in brief

- 1 rights of equality
- 2 right to freedom
- 3 rights against exploitation

- 4 rights to freedom of religion
- 5 cultural and educational rights
- 6 right to property, and
- 7 rights to constitutional remedies

It is an impressive list of rights but what is the reality? A judge of the Supreme Court described them as "empty vessels." The masses have no means to enforce these rights or to benefit from them. It does not make the slightest bit of difference to them whether or not these fundamental rights are mentioned in the constitution or not. They would have been more interested in a few other rights which do not seem to exist: the right to work, to education, to an adequate wage, or to an old-age pension. In a society based on private ownership of the basic instruments and means of production and consequently exploitation of man by man, the rights and privileges belong only to those with property and power, while toils and tribulations fall to the lot of those who create social wealth but do not enjoy the fruits of their labour. In such a society, all declarations of freedom and liberty sound hollow for the majority and so called equal opportunities are dreams beyond their reach. Obviously, the Indian Constitution is not meant for the working class of this country. As J V Stalin stated:

✓ Bourgeois constitutions usually confine themselves to stating the formal rights of citizens, without bothering about the conditions for the exercise of these rights, about the opportunity of exercising them, about the means by which they can be exercised. They speak of the equality of citizens, but forget that there cannot be real equality between employer and workman, between landlord and peasant; if the former possess wealth and political weight in society the latter are deprived of both—if the former are exploiters, the latter are exploited.⁵

Bourgeois Parliamentarism

The operation of the fundamental rights part of the constitution so far proves that the right to rise in revolt against tyranny and exploitation is denied to the people. The right to personal liberty is deprived of its essence when a person can be arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and detained for two years without trial. The government has another weapon in its armoury in the form of Defence of India Rules (DIR) which continue in operation, although the country is no longer in a state of war. In South Africa, the white minority government arrests Africans and Indians who struggle for freedom and kills them by inhuman torture and incarceration. In India, the only difference is that the government sometimes uses slightly more sophisticated means.

✓ This is the state of fundamental rights 'guaranteed' in the constitution. Its class character becomes evident when we find that parliamentarism is also laid down by the basic law, following the pattern of bourgeois democracies. The Constitution of India provides for legislatures

in the centre and the states but Ministers and members of the law-making bodies are responsible to the House and not to the people who elect them. There being no right to recall them, the MPs and MLAs are fully entitled to ignore the interest of their electorates, to go back on their electoral promises and forget about the demands of the masses. If we apply Lenin's criterion of an elective body, that "no elective institution or representative assembly can be regarded as being truly democratic and really representative of the people's will unless the elector's right to recall those elected is accepted and exercised", the Lok Sabha cannot be regarded as a representative body. Unlike the deputies in the USSR, parliamentarians in India do not have to execute their own laws. Therefore, they cannot test the results achieved in practice. Grigoryan makes the following observations about parliamentarism:

Parliamentarism as a system of the organization of the power of the bourgeois involves the application of various devices for distorting the will of the electorate, widely used in capitalist states, in order to limit the representation of the working people in the elective organs. At the same time this system creates a privileged position for the deputies or MPs who become isolated from the electorate after the elections and are practically unanswerable to them. What is more, parliamentarism and all bourgeois systems of power are based on relations between representative institutions and the government (the whole executive apparatus of government) which allow the bureaucratic apparatus, appointed from above, to rise above the elected representative institution and remove itself from their control.⁶

Separation of Powers

In India, the enforcement of laws is the responsibility of the executive. The judiciary is there to settle the disputes arising either between the centre and the state or the states *inter se* or amongst the people. This division of powers in between the three wings—legislature, executive and judiciary, has a special purpose:

Indeed the "division of powers" is merely a division of labour between the organs of the state, and we should have regarded it as a very natural urge on the part of the bourgeoisie to simplify the business of running the state, had historical experience not shown that the bourgeoisie has been using the arrangement not so much to fight feudal absolutism (against which the doctrine was originally directed, but which was swept away by the bourgeois revolution regardless of the "division of powers"), as to consolidate its own domination and produce a more convenient system for suppressing and oppressing the people.⁷

A study from the organizational point of view would confirm the truth that the Constitution of India is a weapon to perpetuate the ruling class in power.

Presidential Prerogative

The constitution uses typically bourgeois methods of drafting the fundamental law in that it employs terms, phrases, concepts and arrangements which are not free from uncertainty and ambiguity. It is very much true of Article 74 which reads: "There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions". This provision does not make clear whether the President is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers. Arguments based on the parliamentary system of government borrowed from the British Constitution are marshalled for the view that the Indian President is in the position of the British monarch and, therefore, he is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers. So far, the Constitution has worked in this fashion without a hitch but a legalistic view which gives substantial powers to the President cannot be ruled out, and when an emergency arises, the bourgeoisie is bound to take up the latter position. Under Article 85 (2), the President is empowered to prorogue the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha or both the Houses or to dissolve the Lok Sabha. He can dissolve the elected parliament and dismiss the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

Similarly, the State Governor serves at the pleasure of the President, that is, of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of the central government. Article 200 gives powers to the Governor to reserve a Bill passed by an elected Legislative Assembly and (indirectly elected) Legislative Council for the assent of the President. The Governor who is not elected by the people is also authorized by the constitution to dissolve the Legislative Assembly at his discretion. Such undemocratic powers are kept in reserve by the bourgeoisie to be used when its interests are in jeopardy.

State of Emergency

In fact, Part XVIII which specifies emergency powers is a clear negation of the constitution. The rationale for emergency powers is state security when the country is under attack or invasion from outside. Though there is no external aggression at present, the State of Emergency is in force and is not likely to be lifted in the foreseeable future. Once emergency is declared, the bourgeoisie casts off the democratic mask and comes out in its true colours. The central executive is entitled to give directions to the states which they are compelled to obey. All democratic rights are taken away. The central parliament can make laws with respect to all matters which fall within the jurisdiction of the states. Thus the rights of the states also can no longer be exercised.

Article 356 is designed to topple an opposition party which may come to power in any state, whenever the government party at the centre wants to do so. Under Article 356, as many as 35 state ministries have been brought down under the President's rule so far. The Namboodiripad ministry in Kerala in 1959 and the Ajoy Mukherjee ministry more recently

in West Bengal were overthrown in this manner. This mechanism, in fact, enables the ruling party at the centre to perpetuate its authority and throttle any opposition party which poses a serious challenge.

Committed Judiciary

The judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts are appointed by the President, that is, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The judges are drawn from landowning and propertied classes. The result is that they are biased in favour of property rights and, therefore, they interpret the constitution accordingly. It is not fortuitous that judges have been interpreting the word 'compensation' as meaning the full market value of the property acquired and creating obstacles to bank nationalization and the abolition of the privy purses of the princes.

The administration of justice is so expensive that working people are practically prevented from entering the portals of 'justice'. In fact, bourgeois justice is so costly that it can be purchased only by the bourgeoisie and not by the proletariat.

Civil Service

Government officials at higher grades are recruited through the Union and State Public Service Commissions which are under direct control of the central government. It is the bureaucracy which primarily maintains and operates the instruments of class power. Even the laws made by parliament or state legislatures are executed by the bureaucrats and if they do not like a particular law, it would fail because it would either not be enforced or implemented in a manner which will defeat its purpose. Article 316 provides that the chairman and other members of a state Public Service Commission shall be appointed by the Governor. Further, nearly one half of the members of every Public Service Commission must have served the government for at least ten years. Therefore, young persons fired with the zeal of reforming bureaucracy by selecting the right type of candidates are shut out of the membership of the Public Service Commissions.

Bureaucrats are selected by the Union Public Service Commission for the top levels of the state service. Thus, even if a radical party assumes power in a state, it would be under constant threat of Article 356 (Presidential takeover) and the laws passed by a radical party would be continually set at naught by the officials appointed by the centre.

Election Machinery

The electoral system adopted by the constitution is indicative of the bourgeois character of the state. Property plays an important role in elections. Though the limits imposed on the candidates with respect to election expenses are as Rs 35,000 and Rs 10,000 for the central and state legislatures respectively, it is a proved fact that lakhs of rupees are doled out by the candidates. A recent ordinance practically removes the limits on the expenses because a candidate can spend as much as he wishes

either through his friends and well-wishers or through the party he belongs to.

The Election Commission is presented as an impartial body. But the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners are appointed by the President, that is, the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. The office of the Chief Election Commissioner is bestowed upon a person in whom the party in power reposes complete confidence.

Centre-State Relations

The constitution confers only normal autonomy to the states. They are utterly dependent on the centre which can keep the state governments under control through the mechanism of grants-in-aid and subsidies. The entire field of economic development, planning, currency and finance is under central purview. A state government cannot raise its own army, air force or navy because defence is exclusively administered by the centre. Thus the tremendous powers invested with the central government is aimed at curbing the growth of the revolutionary forces of the toiling masses and preventing any reduction of state power in the hands of the ruling classes.

¹ L. Grigoryan and Y. Dolgoplov, *Fundamentals of Soviet State Law*, 1971.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ Shibanikinkar, *Constituent Assembly of India*, 1973, p. 106.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵ J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, pp. 543, 551.

⁶ Grigoryan and Dolgoplov, *op. cit.*, 105-6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

Theories of State: Aristotle to Marx

THE discussion on the question of the state is nothing new. Right from the time when the institution came into existence, political theorists have argued on it. Much of their effort has, no doubt, been expended on portraying the ideal state, but they have, in their own ways, also tried to explain the nature of the state existing in reality. We shall take a few examples from the history of Western political thought as it developed through the ages leading to the Marxian concept of the state. However it should be pointed out that although the states described by the political theorists were contemporary to them, and therefore their very theories were relative to their respective historical periods, the thinkers by and large believed that their analyses were absolute and valid for all times.

Higher Community of Aristotle

Aristotle, writing in a period when political organization was just breaking out of the confines of the Greek city-states, conceived of the state as no more than a community of a higher type, which is born because life in that community, the state, shows what human nature intrinsically is. For him, it was 'natural' for human nature to expand its highest powers in the state. At the same time, Aristotle never contemplated any social unit other than the Greek city-state as fulfilling the needs of a civilized life. Thus the small community-state is, for Aristotle, an association of men for the sake of the best moral life, which is also natural.

Today, when states have spread remarkably beyond the confines of communities, the inadequacies of this interpretation are self-evident. Also, in the light of modern science which has made everything relative to something else, it is not possible to talk of an *intrinsic* human nature and the 'best' moral life, for what was moral and 'natural' to Aristotle (like slave-owning) is manifestly immoral and unnatural today. It is also notable that when Aristotle and his contemporaries spoke of 'citizens' and of the state composed by them, they had in mind the small community of slave-owners, the slaves being strictly excluded from this attempt to establish a 'natural' and moral life. In today's context, when the one faith proclaimed as being basic to all political systems is democracy and equal rights to all human beings, this sort of exclusive state can hardly come or remain in existence.

Medievalists on Temporal Power

Mouldering in the dark Middle Ages, the political thinkers who somnambulated through the feudal times were more apt to speak of 'temporal power' than of the state. They, extending the Aristotelian view, conceived the whole of christendom as one vast community. The difference with Aristotle was that they thought of two kinds of authority established within this Christian community, the spiritual and temporal. Within the temporal power, whether it was conceived of as a single empire or as many separate kingdoms, nobody had absolute power. Not only was the authority of the temporal power, taken as a whole, limited by the authority of the church but the authority of every magistrate within it was limited by custom and also—so it was argued—by the 'Law of Nature', the same for all (Christian) men everywhere, though modified by custom to suit the circumstances of particular peoples.

Some of the criticism against this view is the same as against that of Aristotle. At the same time, the introduction of the church and of religion into the politico-economic sphere seems particularly absurd in these, our present, secular times. The imprecise nature of the Medievalists' characterization of the state, the ambiguity about its functions and the important role given to custom, evolved within the confines of a community, combined with the notion of an immutable, absolute Law of Nature—the will of God as manifested through the clergy—as a principal factor in the affairs of men, make this conceptualization of the state unacceptable now. However, historically the Medievalists made an advance over Aristotle in as much as they viewed "temporal authority as a kind of private property."¹

It was this last aspect of their thought that was retained during the subsequent period of the Commercial Revolution and Renaissance, while much of the other obscure ideas about role of the Law of Nature and the church were summarily rejected. The most clear proponent of the concept of the state during the period of the Renaissance was Machiavelli, though later, others like Bodin and Hobbes built on the foundations he had laid.

Absolute Sovereignty of Machiavellian Mercantalism

Unlike the Aristotelian *polis*, Machiavelli's state is morally neutral. Also it is not, for him, co-ordinate with the church; it contains within itself (or, at least it ought to contain) all the authority there is within the territory it embraces. Only the family is prior to the state, and nothing is superior to, or above question by, it. He visualized the state as an organized mass of power used by those who control it for the pursuit of whatever ends seem good to them. He took it for granted that nearly everyone wants to belong to a powerful and respected political community and hence everyone would accept an absolute authority as long as it keeps satisfying the common ambition of all by providing security at the least.

and constant expansion of territory, power—in one word, market—at the best. An idea worthy of its mercantile times! The fulfilment of the state was, therefore, for him possible only through the absolute, amoral, heroic activities of one prince who would exercise the authority which belonged to the state *per se*. In effect, he drew a distinction between the psychology of the ruler and the ruled and adopted the view, later made more explicit by Nietzsche, that ordinary men exist only to give scope to the activities of heroes.

Thus, while Machiavelli modernized the concept of the state by secularizing it and vesting it with sovereignty, the very necessity of his times made him adopt not a morally neutral attitude but the morality of the merchant—morality which could reconcile cutting the throat of a competitor with the common good of all members of the state. Bound as he was by his times, he visualized an ideal—popular or free—government, but the kind of popular government he had in mind and approved of had never existed except in small republics. And yet, since his state is one which is constantly moving from one pinnacle of greatness, both in terms of power and of territory, to another, the state disappears and the individual ruler remains. Louis XIV of France, coming only a few centuries after Machiavelli, put it even more succinctly when he as the ruler proclaimed “*L’Etat C’est moi*”. The fact that his grandson, Louis XVI, had his head chopped off is enough comment on how far the modern world is prepared to accept such an absolute ruler! However, Machiavelli’s idea of the state as an amoral body is the first modern concept of it. Where he goes wrong is when he does not distinguish between the merchants’ search for market with the community’s search for greatness and as a result, comes up with a position on that this can be achieved only through the efforts of one unscrupulous great man. This identification of the community with a band of merchants—generally, in those days, part-time pirates and robbers—was perhaps inevitable for a person who had before him the example of Borgia’s Florence and the vision of Mussolini’s Italy.

Social Contract for Possessive Capitalism

If Machiavelli was the political theorist of the piratical mercantile age, the proponents of the ‘Social Contract’—Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau—represent the political spirit of capitalist society. In their theories, they portray the political expression of possessive individualism.² Just as in capitalist society every nexus is reduced to the cash nexus, and human relationships in the process of production—the most vital process in human existence—are determined by contract between two parties, the Social Contract theorists thought society had always existed. They visualized state as having emerged from an “anarchical State of Nature” by contract entered into by conscious human beings. Both the State of Nature and Social Contract were absolute and valid for all times for Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau and on these points these three great political

theorists of the capitalist revolution were in total agreement. The differences among them were on what the contract consisted of, not on whether it was ever made. Hobbes, the most clearly bourgeois among the three, conceived of the State of Nature as being one of brutal competition or war, between animal-like humans, fighting for property and the state which followed it as an all-encompassing, absolutely sovereign, Leviathan. The sovereignty manifested itself in absolute rule.

Locke, the ideologue of the English Glorious Revolution, which established capitalism in England while maintaining feudal forms, thought of the State of Nature as a more 'rational' and 'human' operation where all men are free to dispose of themselves and their possessions as they think fit, and their obligation is to respect the same freedom in others. The English constitutionalist in him could not conceive of even the State of Nature as not bound by law—the Law of Nature: similarly, the state which emerges out of his 'Social Contract' is also beneficent. The similarity between Hobbes and Locke, inasmuch as both think of men as dominated by the 'instinct' of owning more and more of property—the instinct which leads them into the Social Contract—is marked, though the Hobbesian man is a brutal self-centred fighter while Locke's is more a stiff-upper-lipped gentleman of property. Rousseau came at a period later than both Hobbes and Locke. By then capitalism as a system had been established in England and was rearing its, by then, obviously ugly head in France, though it had not yet revealed all its weaknesses; it still had to capture state power in France. Nevertheless, capitalism and its cut-throat ethics could not be viewed with equanimity equal to that of Hobbes' or Locke's. Rousseau, whose state is based on an abstract General Will while accepting the Social Contract idea also expresses some of the petty-bourgeois paradoxical misgivings about the state. He would much rather revert to the small village community than live in the capitalist state created by the Social Contract of his ancestors. However, much as he tries, he cannot undo the Social Contract.

Dialectical Idealism in Bourgeois Revolution

Herein lies the fallacy of the Contractarians, for if the state is created by a contract, it should be possible for the contracting parties to end it or alter it. But no more can that be done than society itself be abolished or declared null and void! The other great fallacy is their conceptualization of an immutable human nature—a view shared by their contemporary political economists also. The bourgeois man has not always existed and operated on his capitalist ethics. Hence to conceive of an act of contract—a typically capitalist act—as having been performed by anthropoid apes is absurd. The necessity for this concept of a pre-historical contract seems to have been the fact that Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau visualized their contemporary state from a mechanistic materialist point of view. The state was secular, it was sovereign, it encompassed everything in its fold, it was self-perpetuating, it was immutable, it was a

Leviathan, a mechanism which ticked on and on. However, the necessity arose of finding out what made this gigantic (Locke's) monstrous (Hobbes's) intolerable (Rousseau's) clockwork tick. Who had wound it up? The Medievalists had their answer in God Almighty (And the Lord said "Let there be state" and there was state!) but the contemporaries and descendants of Newton, Copernicus and Galileo, could not very well adopt this view (though in Locke there are vague overtones). They found the answer in the nature of their contemporary men who, by consciously entering into a Social Contract, wind up the mechanism of the state. In as much as the Contractarians eschewed the mush of religion and treated the state as a materialist subject they made an advance; in as much as they restricted themselves to a mechanistic view of it, they failed in explaining its true nature. They made it a semi-absolute!

Hegel came after Hobbes and Rousseau, in a country where the bourgeois revolution was long overdue, and yet in spite of, or perhaps because of, its non-occurrence till then a situation existed wherein if a revolution were to occur from below it would tend not to place the bourgeoisie into power but perhaps to sweep it away along with the feudal remnants into the dustbin of history. At the time, therefore, the necessity was for a theory of the state which would make the state an end in itself, which would make possible sweeping reforms from above seemingly carried out for and by themselves. And yet, the progress of the scientific logic which had taken place till then would allow neither the acceptance of an absolute authority nor notions of the Leviathan, having had the breath of life put into it, operating on its own. A dilemma existed and Hegel was the political theorist who devised a way out of it.

Hegel: Idea Primacy and Private Property

Hegel adopted the scientific methodology. His dialectical scheme of examining phenomena—both material and spiritual—was perfect; but his faith was in idealism. The point of departure for him was belief in the primacy of ideas representing themselves in God. Hence everything became for him the act of God, acting not in the arbitrary manner the Medievalists had tended to conceive, but in a predictable dialectical manner. History was the March of God on earth and it consisted of the dialectical triad of family, civil society and the state. The state is thus the synthesis of the contradiction between family and civil society, between ethical and communal life, between the idea of life and the material existence. It is the sum in itself and finally, climbing dialectically on the shoulders of history, the German state becomes the very manifestation of the Supreme Idea—God Himself.

This is no place to discuss the many and varied aspects of Hegel's political philosophy, but one point which must be made is that, Hegel, like Hobbes and others before him, conceived of property as an essential element in the existence of contradictions which create the state. He does not care to answer questions like "How does property arise?" or "why

do men desire property?"; but he is quite clear in the belief that the rational man he is concerned with, as part of his inherent process of learning to understand and control his environment, of necessity acquires property and has, as an inviolable right, the right to private property. Hence, on this point, Hobbes, who is concerned with man as a brutal acquisitive creature, and Hegel, whose man is rational, the image of God, are equally bourgeois—property for both is of the essence.

Since Hegel adopts the dialectical approach, he does not require the interference of an *external* force in his imagined movement of history and politics. However, this very dialectic is put upside down in Hegel as his conclusions are dependent entirely on the wrong, unscientific belief in primacy of ideas, consciousness, over material reality. And, contrary to his own theory, the dialectic stops at the establishment of the German state—the primitive forms under Frederick the Great and Bismark, and the sophisticated finished product under Hitler.

The great contribution of Hegel, however, is that he fully and finally asserts the sovereignty of the state, the growth of it on a dialectical principle and the fact that it represents the "will" of those in control of it. (Rousseau had also talked of General Will). The fact that he had no perception of the scientific truth that matter is primary and ideas secondary in both time and importance, and of dialectically operating classes within the state—even the German "all people" fascist state—makes his theory weak, though still advanced compared to that of others.

Marx: Production Mode and Relations

Marx³ finally provided a concept of the state which, based as it was on his historical predecessors, took all the aspects of the state discussed earlier into account and yet gave a completely new interpretation. For him, the state is part of the superstructure—a reflection of the economic base—and has a dialectical relationship with the given socio-economic reality. Secondly, the state is in essence an instrument of force, a coercive apparatus to maintain the social status quo. Thirdly, maintenance of the status quo is always in the interest of the ruling class. Fourthly, the ruling class acquires its position by virtue of its ownership and control over the means of production. This determines the character of the economy, the society, and the polity. Finally, a society which is based on the ownership of property contains within it the mutually contradictory elements of property owners and non-owners. There is an irreconcilable conflict between the two, and in this situation, the property owners utilize the state to maintain the status quo of conflict and not to resolve it by solving the basis of this conflict: the state *legalizes* the conflict; it cannot *reconcile* it. Hence, the state comes about in society only when property emerges, property owners emerge and the necessity of protecting the property arises. (Property emerges only when an economic surplus exists). The state, therefore, right from the beginning is an expression of this unequal

property relation and is a reflection of the General Will of the property owners. In no case is the state neutral between property owners and non-owners.

Further, the state maintains the political-economic status quo through the exercise of its various organs of administration—the army, the police, the bureaucracy, in one word, the government. This government can appear in many forms within the same kinds of states—democratic, autocratic, monarchical, plutocratic, aristocratic, and so on—but the nature of the state itself remains the same, as it *always* reflects the mode of production, the ownership of property, and is an expression of the General Will of the property owners.

No one component of the state—army, police, bureaucracy or parliament—can be the same as the state itself, nor do all of them put together as components add up to the full implications of the state. The components need not necessarily reflect the existing property relations, the prevalent mode of production, but as organs of the state they have to perform the functions which the state has, for protecting the status quo.

Philosophy had fulfilled its function with Hegel when it had described the existing status quo in its totality, if only from an idealist point; Marx realized the fact that what had been described was the status quo and came to the conclusion: "Philosophers have interpreted the world in many ways, the point is to change it."

ARVIND N DAS

¹ John Plemnatz, *Man and Society*, London 1963, Vol I, p 18.

² C B Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, Oxford 1964.

³ By Marx is meant Marx and Engels.

BOOK REVIEWS

Review Articles

Distant View of the East

NIGEL HARRIS, *INDIA-CHINA: UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND REVOLUTION*, Vikas Publications, Delhi 1974.

NIGEL Harris belongs to the group of British Trotskyists who publish their analyses of international affairs in the monthly journal *International Socialism*. The author claims that in the last couple of decades his group "has put down roots among British industrial militants. It is now already in a position to contest with the Communist Party for leadership of the most militant section of the working class."¹ The essays presented in the book deal with certain basic questions of revolutionary perspective and strategy in India and some aspects of the economic development and political alignments in China.

It is becoming increasingly evident that Indian planning is more an exercise in political rhetoric than a serious attempt at developing the resources of the country. Nigel Harris seems to recognize this, when on the general question of the economic development of backward countries, including India and China, he advances his central thesis: "All the popular claptrap about 'take off,' 'sustained growth' and a permanent prospect of rising standards of living for all was a confidence trick to induce acceptance of a permanently unequal world. The millenium is not for the majority of the world's people."² There is likely to be general agreement among the ranks of the Indian Left with Harris's analysis of the contemporary economic scene in the country and with his bleak forebodings. He justly points out that the "size and rapid growth of black money make all financial statistics in India suspect."³ According to him, a stage will soon be reached when even a 20 per cent rate of growth will not absorb the reserve army of labour. To him, the 'Green Revolution' is "almost a textbook example of the paradox of capitalism—each increase in output seems only to make conditions worse".⁴ He exposes the lopsided nature of our development by pointing out the increase in the production

of consumer durables which, though incapable of stimulating the whole economy, influences the distribution of private investment and public priorities.

Harris's political analysis, however, is not likely to win any such general agreement. He would probably say that the likely disagreement will only substantiate his criticism that the Indian Left is confused between the alternatives of sterile parliamentarism and mindless terrorism. Many of his essays directly or indirectly tackle the questions of the class basis and strategy of the Indian revolution. But both in the diagnosis and in the remedy prescribed, the author is wide of the mark. For instance, Harris postulates that the legacy of what he calls 'Stalinism' is the root cause of the crisis of the Indian Left. He argues that this inheritance has plunged the Indian Left into a crisis which has no solution other than either "parlour speculation of mere theorists" or the "mindless militancy of simple activists."

It is not difficult to see that Harris's Trotskyist obsession with 'Stalinism' inhibits his understanding of the complex of historical factors leading to the present fragmentation of the Indian Left. Harris blames Stalin for every defeat of the international communist movement. He says: "The terrible defeat inflicted on the Chinese Communist Party in 1927, the ever more shattering defeat of the German Communist Party in Hitler's rise to power, the destruction of the Spanish revolution, the failure to prevent the Second World War, and, when declared, the failure to transform it into the European socialist revolution, these were the triumphs of the Stalinist Comintern and its satraps. The whole line of development of modern history was reshaped by the degeneration of the Russian revolution".⁵ When he talks of the 'reshaping' of modern history he has in mind already a fixed shape of history which would have come about had Trotsky defeated Stalin in the contest for policy and power. This is an obvious instance of what one may call 'personality cult in reverse' which has nothing to do with Marxism.

Socialism through Coalition Ministries?

It is unfair on the part of Harris to suggest that when the Indian leftist activists talk about the proletariat "the word is largely detached from any real workers or real peasants".⁶ Though he swears by the working class, the trade union movement in the country does not inspire in him confidence about the revolutionary potentiality of the Indian proletariat. Typical of the Trotskyists is the sectarian underestimation of the role of peasants and middle classes in the revolution. In fact, he traces all the ills of the Indian Left, including its 'theoretical poverty', to the middle class social basis of the revolutionaries. Harris has only contempt for the strategy of the united front of classes partly because he does not have enough patience to differentiate between stages in the revolution and to seek class combinations and alignments appropriate to each stage. To see the Indian revolution in terms of battle lines neatly drawn between the

bourgeoisie and the proletariat (with the grudging admission of a supporting role for sections of the peasantry) is to oversimplify the Indian reality to suit a textbook pattern.

It appears that E M S Namboodiripad's breakfast with G D Birla has become the most discussed breakfast in modern history. Harris mentions it to prove his contention that the ministries led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Kerala and West Bengal were nothing but the governments of the status quo. He argues with a certain degree of plausibility that "the Left parties have accepted responsibility for administering this Rightward-moving status quo for the starvation in the countryside and the unemployment and the sheer human misery in the cities".⁷ He also states that this "Rightward-moving perspective for India might include at some stage a military coup to maintain 'law and order', particularly as Congress state governments fall. In that situation, the articulate Left faces at worst physical annihilation—as in Indonesia—or mass imprisonment—as in Greece".⁸ There is no doubt that many on the Indian Left share the apprehension expressed in these passages; but the basic premise that the CPI (M) believes it to be possible to build socialism by heading Left coalition ministries is questionable. It is sterile dogmatism to argue in the abstract whether participation in the bourgeois parliamentary democratic system, including its inevitable corollary of forming governments whenever possible, is revolutionary or not. The question can be meaningfully discussed only in the concrete context of such participation accelerating or retarding, in the long run, the process of accretion of revolutionary strength and fighting capacity to the masses.

East Not So Red!

Nigel Harris's lack of understanding of the problems faced by the Chinese Communists is revealed in his comments on the Chinese Cultural Revolution. He reduces the Cultural Revolution to a power struggle between the centre and the provinces over the question of the allocation of scarce resources. His conceptual framework of class struggle is so rigid that in his eyes the Chinese Revolution was merely a military gain and not a social struggle. The commune movement in the sixties is interpreted as having aimed at reducing the provincial leadership's power. According to him, the Chinese ruling class is fragmented; therefore politically the country is still in a stalemate, and economically standing still; there is simmering hostility among the people; the resourceful among them resort to corruption, embezzlement and blackmarketing or flee to Hong Kong; the lot of the rest is to sink in apathy and cynicism.

Harris's own summing up of the early phase of the Cultural Revolution is that the two years of struggle have nothing to show "except perhaps (for 1967 alone) 86.4 million copies of Mao's *Selected Works* and 350 million *Red Books*".⁹ The Trotskyists have not yet forgiven the Chinese Communists for falsifying the predictions and spurning the prescriptions offered by Trotsky. On the whole, Harris's accounts of the political

revolutionary forces and trends in China and India are so prejudiced and subjective that I am tempted to quote him against himself: "Particularly when people are far away from the scene of action, they miss the complexities, the wrangles, the real men struggling under heroic concepts. In doing so, they do no justice at all to the real victories which are won".¹⁰

Trotsky has pronounced that it is not possible to build socialism in one country. Therefore presumably "arguing from first principles" Nigel Harris concludes that what is being built in the Soviet Union, China and the other socialist countries is not socialism but state capitalism. He concedes that private ownership of the means of production has not been restored in the Soviet Union; all the same, Stalin created the new class of state capitalist bureaucrats. Mao Tse-tung's Marxism is dismissed as mere agrarian populism combined with radical nationalism. Gandhi, in India was a more thoroughgoing anti-capitalist than Mao in China. The Chinese regime oppresses the workers and peasants in that country. Economic development is impossible for China (as it is ruled out for India) because imperialism will not permit it. "If economic development is not possible for China, then the same kind of crisis faces the leadership of China as that facing India. What is more, there can be no talk of socialism".¹¹

Help and Guidance

After such evaluation, the Chinese People's Liberation Army should undoubtedly be reassured and feel grateful to the *International Socialism* group for its 'principled' offer of support:

In any clash between world imperialism and China, we should give unconditional support to the Chinese regime, as we should to any poor and oppressed country in a similar situation. But should we support the Chinese regime in its struggle to subordinate its own working class and peasantry?¹²

The Trotskyists do not seem to realize that they are a political anachronism in the modern world. In no country, developed or backward, are they able to advance the cause of the revolution despite their supposedly brilliant analyses and much-vaunted authentic fusion with the proletariat. They will not work for a revolution in Britain or India or Mexico or some other country: they want only the all-embracing world revolution. However, the particular group to which Harris belongs is modest about its own role in evolving a really internationalist and proletarian revolutionary alternative to the existing paths. He says:

International Socialism's role in assisting this process is obviously, if regrettably, limited. Organizationally and financially, *IS* is scarcely equipped to do very much outside of Britain. However, our theoretical position could be of particular importance in what help we could give. In particular, our critique of Stalinism and our consistent stress upon the role of the proletariat could be important in clarifying perspectives for some socialists in some backward countries.¹³

Establishment Scientists

A RAHMAN AND K D SHARMA (EDS.), *SCIENCE POLICY STUDIES*, Somaiya Publishers, Bombay 1974, pp 543, Rs 80.

THE central place that science and technology have come to occupy as a single united process in production and the consequent implications for development make it necessary to study the planning of this vital sector in Indian society. Such planning involves problems of complex social life economic, political and cultural, which are in constant interaction with science and technology.

This book is a collection of articles, speeches and specific studies by politicians, science planners and scientists. The material in the book covers the period from 1939 to 1966. A major criterion determining the selection is that it "reflects the views of the people who occupy important positions in the Government of India or other science organizations in the country." An attempt to put forth the official view of science policy, it includes the Congress Party's resolution on science and technology. The first section of the book contains remarks made by Jawaharlal Nehru, Zakir Husain and Indira Gandhi at various science congresses. Although cliché-ridden and repetitive, these remarks set the tone of the collection.

Privileged Decisionmakers

It is maintained by the ruling classes that (in Indira Gandhi's words) "a major role of the scientific community in any country, whether it be capitalist, socialist or communist, is to develop universal norms and a rational approach to social and economic problems." That such 'universalization' and 'rationality', when indifferent to the realities of socio-economic systems, create the horrors of the Vietnam war while depriving scientists of the right to function with a social awareness, is sought to be camouflaged by offering them the 'carrot' of positions close to 'decision making'. Official scientists, so pacified, utilize this approach to absolve themselves of the responsibility to society. It is quite evident that just the "honoured position" of being associated with the formulation of

policies would not suffice to create a core of socially 'neutral' scientists; and the government in its 1958 Science Policy Resolution recognizes this when it states that it will pursue its aims "by offering good conditions of service to scientists." The thrust of the Congress Party's 1969 Draft Resolution on Science and Technology is that the integration of scientists into the system should manifest itself in their key decision-making positions. The scientists who occupy these posts must be recognized as those who have made their choices. It is these whose opinions feature predominantly in the collection.

The "prescriptive science policy" as practised by these scientists is understandably piecemeal. Although some of them pay lip service to an integrated approach, recognizing the fact that science policy cannot be divorced from the socio-economic policies of the governing classes, they remain averse, to any analysis of the socio-economic and political prerequisites or implications of their prescriptions. As such, a major weakness of these science policy 'experts' is their attempt, if this is made at all, to generalize from their isolated laboratory experience. This pseudo-theorization which is incapable of answering more general questions is constantly confronted with its own futility. It fails to answer why the policies recommended are never in fact implemented. That the lack of a genuinely integrated approach, which leads them to accept ruling-class objectives as universal, parades in the garb of 'value-free' or 'de-ideologized' science can hardly conceal the singular lack of theoretical vigour and historical perspective displayed in their pronouncements. They do no more than offer an apology for the existing reality of a crisis-ridden economy which increasingly is aggravating the poverty and degradation of the Indian people.

Fostering Social Neutralism

Academic credence is sought to be lent to their 'efforts' by heavily quoting from the theoreticians of the capitalist world, but even this device fails to cover the gaps. The same scientists who noted an 'ad-hocism' in the science policy of the government a decade ago are unable to answer for the continuing ad-hocism in spite of their involvement in decision making. Equally problematic for them is the fact that in spite of increasing expenditure on science and technology, there are more unemployed scientists and engineers today. The fact that the benefits of the 'development' of science and technology have not accrued to the people will obviously present insurmountable problems for those who are committed to seeking solutions within the confines of the "given" system.

The material presented in the collection provides ready examples of the hypocrisy and confusion involved. While the Indian National Congress claims to be "convinced that the development of a scientific temper resulting in a scientific outlook among the masses and the pursuit of science and technology must play an important part in the cultural regeneration of the people, especially in combating obscurantism and

superstition", ministers and committed scientists busy themselves preparing Nehru Memorial Lectures on "Spirituality". To take another example, in 1965, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research envisaged a surplus of engineers within the ten years to follow, even if educational facilities remained at the 1965 level. However, the Memorandum of the Joint Project of the Indian Statistical Institute, experts of the London School of Economics and the Planning Commission, predicted a large demand for such personnel. The estimates of the two on engineering personnel required in 1976 differed by 29,000 degree holders and 14,000 diploma holders!

Science policy cannot be viewed merely as an area of quantitative analysis. In order to be effective both quantitative and qualitative analyses must be undertaken. The conception that science policy studies should be mainly concerned with creating 'data banks' for science planners operating within a "given" theoretical and social framework, is erroneous and particularly misleading in the context of India. For the quantitative approach is reflective of the notion that 'enough resources' and 'sustained effort' in an area of science and technology would, of itself, lead to the achievement of desired social objectives. The major problems facing any seriously concerned science planner in India are those raised by supporting the social system. This is something which the quantitative approach to an assessment of scientific and technological development is unable to discern. This factor is largely responsible for the waning popularity of this approach in the wake of studies necessitated by the importance of assessing secondary, 'unintended' effects of technological development.

Neglected Areas

A common theoretical premise that is evident in the articles of this collection is that "technological innovation is a dynamic, self-generating process", with each separate technology autonomously leading to constant innovations. Consequently it is supposed that free scientific research and step by step technological innovations along a given functional path would sooner or later lead to a better understanding of the world and hence to social transformation. This position which in effect makes science policy itself redundant implies that social problems are derivative of technological problems, that is, technology impinges on society in a one-way relationship. Such a position betrays the distortions arising from a neglect of the societal character and role of technology. Science and technology provide means to handle social problems, but problems arise and are worked out by men living in concrete social conditions. Thus the responsibility for social problems and failures cannot be shifted arbitrarily to factors like science and technology.

Typical of the inadequacy of the quantitative, socially 'neutral' approach which characterizes the views expressed in this collection, is its failure to treat the history of science as anything more than a chronology of scientific theories and practices so that it appears to be of no value

to the study of science policy, except providing cultural embellishment to an otherwise extremely dry exercise. In this collection the entire history of the development of Indian science has not even been considered worthy of inclusion, while stray remarks in some of the selected articles reflect the dilettante approach to this important aspect. In fact, a study of the historical development of science, its logic and methodology, makes a significant contribution towards evolving a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between science, technology and society which is crucial for science policy studies. In general the history of science acquires significance in relation to the formulation of ideas concerning the evolution and development of scientific systems. Some of the questions to be answered in this context are: How does the edifice of science grow? Is the internal logic of the development of science independent of the development of societal and technical needs? How are scientists motivated to break out of the confines of "normal science" and compelled to make qualitatively new discoveries? How has the relationship between science and technology varied historically? A study of the history of science in India would provide science policy studies with an understanding of the specific and concrete forms of interaction and development of science in the context of Indian society.

Wanted: An Integrated View

An historical analysis of the methodology of science is essential for understanding science as a social and intellectual phenomenon on capable of being planned. For the theoretical enrichment and viability of science policy as a discipline, a critical analysis of the prevalent conceptual framework, that is, the methodologies or philosophies of science, must constitute an integral part of science policy studies. For the conviction that the interaction of science and society is a two-way process, that not only do developments in the sciences bring about changes in society but socio-economic changes influence the development of science, forms the basis on which actual studies of science policy require to be conducted. In order to make this understanding more than a borrowed phrase, lifted unthinkingly out of well-known books, it is essential to devote serious attention to the historical development of science in India. The present selection compounds the existing lacuna in this sphere by not even recognizing the importance of this work, let alone contributing to it.

This collection of *Science Policy Studies* however serves the purpose of indicating the real flaw responsible for the piecemeal approach to the study of scientific and technological development in India. At present all science policy studies are reduced to the level of progress reports for the respective ministerial agencies. If science policy is to be studied with academic rigour and criticality, and function as a real contribution to social development, it must be free to analyse all aspects of the problem, enabling it to take an integrated view of the theory, organization and finally the formulation and implementation of the policy for science. It is

only too evident that a government, which explicitly requires scientists to ignore the socio-economic system and the potentialities open for change (thereby isolating them from the struggles of the people which reflect the real forces pressing for change) cannot provide these scientists with the opportunity either to engage in such analyses or to make any worthwhile contribution to the social problems that confront Indian science today.

R P

KERALA GEARS

QUILON

Manufacturers of:

T G K Superprinter

(RA I size, equivalent to Double Demy Cylinder
Printing Machine)

T G K Printmaster

(RA II size, equivalent to Single Demy Cylinder
Printing Machine)

PHONES : Office 2892
 Residence 4147

WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS

from

METROPOLITAN INSTRUMENTS LIMITED

**the manufacturers of
world famous range of
KELTRON-METRO COUNTERS**

M/s. Metropolitan Instruments Ltd.,
24/263, Syrian Church Road,
TRIVANDRUM-695 001.

Telephone : 60029/60241
Telegram : PRECISION

INDUSTRIALISE OR PERISH-

Industrialisation -

Maximum Industrialisation -

Our objective -

Let every family be turned into

an Industrial Unit

Make the best use of the aid

And guidance we offer to the

Small, Medium and Large Industries

As well as to the Cottage and Handicraft Sectors -

Under very liberal terms and conditions -

Our aim is to emerge as an

Industrial Nation

We Welcome Entrepreneurs.

Released by the Department of Industries and Commerce.

Calling all fortune seekers

kerala state lotteries

pioneers in lotteries

present you the exciting

Vishu bumper offer

rs 5,00,000

own your ticket soon

date of draw on

11.4.1975

**issued by the directorate of state lotteries,
trivandrum, kerala.**

ANNOUNCING ANOTHER SPECIAL ISSUE

OF

Social Scientist

In August this year, when this journal passes the landmark of its third year of publication, it is proposed to bring out another thematic number. The articles will deal with various facets of the

NATIONAL QUESTION IN INDIA.

It is hoped to give full coverage to all the states and territories. Intending contributors should write immediately to the editor.

Agents now get an opportunity to collect orders and book their additional requirements in advance.

No medium would be more suitable for advertisers.

For further information please write to:

**Business Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1
Kerala**

**Statement about ownership and other particulars about
the newspaper (SOCIAL SCIENTIST)**

FORM IV

(See Rule.8)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Place of publication | <i>Trivandrum</i> |
| 2 | Periodicity of publication | <i>Monthly</i> |
| 3 | Publisher's name | <i>Jacob Eapen</i> |
| | nationality | <i>Indian</i> |
| | address | <i>Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum 1</i> |
| 4 | Printer's name | <i>Jacob Eapen</i> |
| | nationality | <i>Indian</i> |
| | address | <i>Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum 1</i> |
| 5 | Editor's name | <i>Jacob Eapen</i> |
| | nationality | <i>Indian</i> |
| | address | <i>Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum 1</i> |
| 6 | Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital | <i>Indian School of Social Sciences,
Trivandrum 1</i> |

I, Jacob Eapen, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date *27-3-1975*

JACOB EAPEN
Signature of publisher

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 AUGUST 1974
Historical background of Moplah rebellion, outbreaks 1836-1919: *Conrad Wood*; Marxism and quantum mechanics: *K K Thekkedath*; Note on informational basis of Indian planning; Communication on science policy for national development.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER 1974
Developing countries in the international division of labour: *V A Gaitonde*; Bengali intelligentsia and the politics of rent, 1873-1885: *Kalyan Kumar Sen Gupta*; Democracy versus totalitarianism: *G V Rao*; Marxism and India: *Ajit Roy*; Notes on Sikkim; Democratizing higher education.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 OCTOBER 1974
Indian ocean and Japan in US grand strategy: *Michael Klare*; Concept of tradition in Indian sociological thought: *H C Srivastava*; State and religion in the Chola empire: *N Vana-mamalai*; Irula folklore: *R Perialwar*; Adivasi oppression in Maharashtra: *Sharad Patil*; Communication on Marxism and Christianity; Appeal to all progressive writers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 NOVEMBER 1974
World, capitalist crisis: *B T Ranadive*; Three misconceptions about the state: *Arvind N Das*; Attitudes to political parties: *Sheo Nath Singh*; Notes on: Indian industrial policy and economic power concentration; Signposts to new education.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 5 DECEMBER 1974
Inflation, stagnation and an alternative approach to planning: *Suhas Chattopadhyay*; Early South Indian society and economy - The Tinai concept: *K Sivathamby*; Report on economic crisis and the fifth five year plan; Notes on: Theory of convergence; Secondary school teachers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6/7 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1975. Current crisis, planning and growth: *Ashok Mitra*; Current inflation in India: *Prabhat Patnaik*; Fiscal policies and inflation: *M J K Thavaraj*; Distributional effects of inflation: *R-Radhakrishna* and *Atul Sarma*; State intervention and foodgrain prices: *N Krishnaji*; A world without inflation: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Notes on: Development studies in Sri Lanka; Parliamentary process.

Social Scientist

APRIL
1975

33

Samuelson's Marx-Kritik □ Some Problems
of Indian History □ Origin and Development
of Islam □ Student Leadership in Lucknow
□ Mathematical Methods in International
Relations Analysis □ Property Rights

Social Scientist

Editor

Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor

Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation

SOCIAL SCIENTIST

Indian School of Social Sciences

Triyandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES*INLAND*

Annual : Rs 30

Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11

Air Mail : Annual \$ 17

(In Pound Sterling)

Sea Mail : Annual £ 4.50

Air Mail : Annual £ 6.00

Single Copy Rs 3

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 3 APRIL
NUMBER 9 1975

CONTENTS

J E King	3	Samuelson's 'Marx-Kritik'
E M S Namboodiripad	14	Problems of Indian History
Asghar Ali Engineer	22	Origin and Development of Islam

REPORT

Rashid Ali Syed	46	Student Leadership in Lucknow
------------------------	----	-------------------------------

NOTES

V A Gaitonde	54	Mathematical Methods in Ana- lysing International Relations
L Srikantiah	65	Property Rights under the Constitution

BOOK REVIEW

K R S Nair	72	Conflicts and Crisis
-------------------	----	----------------------

Articles, report, notes and book review express the views of their authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER works in Bombay as a civil engineer.

V A GAITONDE is a journalist in Bombay.

J E KING is lecturer in economics, Lonsdale College, The University of Lancaster, England.

K R S NAIR is BLITZ staff correspondent, Trivandrum.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD is member of the Polit Bureau, Communist Party of India (Marxist).

L SRIKANTIAH, Barrister-at-Law, is an advocate in Mysore.

RASHID ALI STED teaches sociology at Lucknow University.

J E KING

Samuelson's 'Marx-Kritik'

PROFESSOR Paul Samuelson has recently returned to the criticism of Marxian economics, and in doing so has provoked a considerable controversy.¹ In this paper I outline Samuelson's criticisms of Marx, discuss their validity, and assess their significance as an attack on Marxian political economy as a whole.

Samuelson's 1971 article is long, discursive, and poorly structured. Important arguments are relegated to footnotes, while numerical examples and potted histories of economic thought clutter the text. At the end of it all, the reader is left with the impression that Samuelson has presented a formidable case against Marxian economics, but with no clear and concise summary of the case itself.

In fact Samuelson makes three main points.² Firstly, he attacks Marx's theory of technical change. He argues that the rate of profit can decline as a result of innovation only if the real wage increases, and that Marx was wrong to predict a falling rate of profit with constant real wages. The other two lines of attack, which make up the bulk of Samuelson's argument, focus on the labour theory of value. Samuelson criticizes the transformation of labour values into prices of production as "a process of rejection and replacement"³, whereby an incorrect analysis is replaced by a correct one. Furthermore, he suggests that the concept of

labour value is redundant, and yields no insights which cannot be obtained from the theory of 'competitive prices'.

I

Technology and Profit Rate

Samuelson's first point is quite simple, and completely unassailable. For Marx technical progress has two effects. By creating and sustaining the industrial reserve army of the unemployed, it provides "the pivot on which the law of demand and supply of labour works"⁴ to hold down real wages. And by inducing a continuous increase in the organic composition of capital, it generates a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Though his predictions are hedged around with qualifications and reservations, there is no doubt that Marx expected a falling rate of profit simultaneously with stagnant or even falling real wages.⁵

Even economists friendly to Marx have been unhappy with this conclusion. Joan Robinson, for example, noted as early as 1942⁶ that if technical progress raised the productivity of labour⁷ while the real wage remained constant, the rate of exploitation would rise. Now the organic composition of capital is the ratio of constant to variable capital, c/v ($=k$); and the rate of exploitation is the ratio of surplus value to variable capital, s/v ($=e$). On Marx's assumptions technical progress increases both k and e . But the rate of profit (r) is $s/c+v$, which is equal to $e/k+1$.⁸ Thus the *net* effect of technical change on the rate of profit appears to be indeterminate.⁹

Samuelson's argument¹⁰ is that, given a constant real wage, the effect *is* determinate and operates in the opposite direction to that predicted by Marx. With a constant real wage, technical progress will *increase* r ; conversely, if r remains a constant or falls, the real wage must *increase*. Given a constant real wage, capitalists will introduce a new invention only if it raises r . If it does not, then they have no incentive to adopt the invention. And if a mistake is made, so that a "technical disimprovement" which reduces r is introduced, capitalists will have an obvious incentive (once they realize their mistake) to scrap the invention and return to the old technology.

The argument may be illustrated by reference to the "wage-profit frontier" analysed by Sraffa.¹¹ For any given technology, the curve shows the highest rates of profit consistent with alternative levels of the real wage (w). Very little can be said *a priori* about its shape, except that it is monotonically decreasing.¹² One possible frontier is $F_1 F_1$ in figure 1. For a given real wage (Ow^1), A shows the highest available rate of profit ($=Or^1$). Samuelson's point is simply that capitalists will introduce an invention only if it permits them to move northeastwards from A to a new and *higher* frontier such as $F_2 F_2$. They would *not* introduce a technical change which forced them to move to a lower frontier such as $F_3 F_3$, since here (at B) the same real wage would yield a lower rate of profit ($=Or^{11}$). From the capitalists' point of view—and in capitalism it is their point of

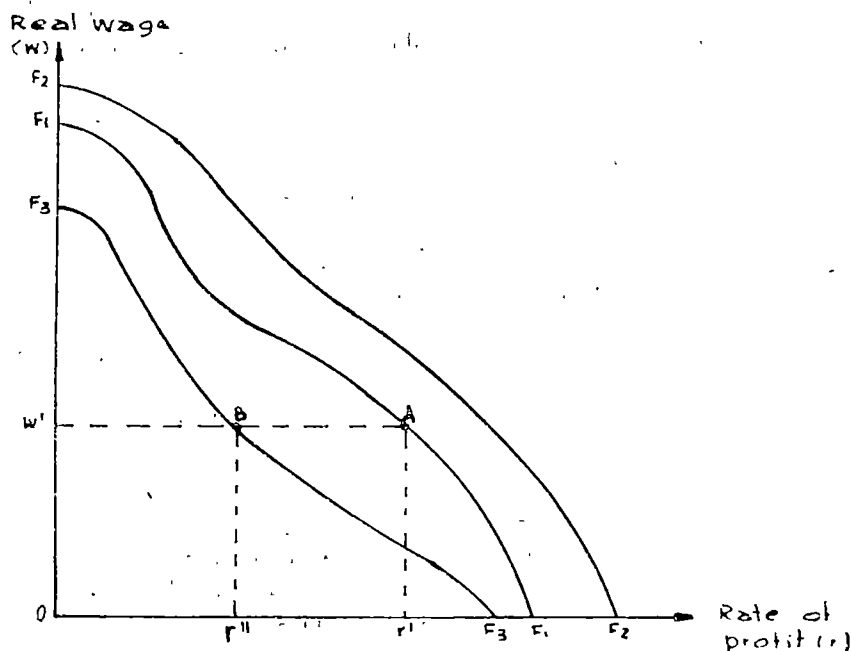


Figure 1. The wage profit frontier

view which matters—such a change would not be a technical *improvement* at all.¹³

Relevance to Underdeveloped Economies

It could be objected that capitalists are neither completely rational nor entirely efficient, and generally operate within (rather than on) the frontier. But in order for technical change to result in a *continuous* fall in r (with w constant), they would have to become *increasingly* irrational and inefficient. So long as profits remain the goal of capital accumulation, and this goal is pursued as eagerly as before, Samuelson is quite right, and Marx's theory of technical progress must be judged to be internally inconsistent. This does not entail that either w or r must increase in all circumstances. Marx's analysis is conducted on the assumption of a closed economy. In an open economy a deterioration of the terms of trade may offset the effects of technical progress and induce a simultaneous decline in both r and w .¹⁴

Most Marxists had in any case already accepted that something was wrong with Marx's argument, since in advanced capitalist countries real wages have risen very substantially over the last century. The practical relevance of Samuelson's criticism is probably greatest in underdeveloped countries, where the industrial reserve army may well be strong enough to maintain a subsistence wage level. Here we would expect technical progress to result in an increasing rate of profit. This seems to have

happened in Brazil under ten years of military dictatorship. It may also have been the effects of the 'green revolution' in Indian agriculture.¹⁵

II

Transformation Problem

The clearest statement of Samuelson's second argument is given in his 1970 article. Here he is discussing the solution to the famous transformation problem which has been proposed by Bortkiewicz and Sweezy¹⁶, and which is generally accepted as consistent with Marx's own intentions. It concerns a three-sector capitalist economy, producing means of production (constant capital, c); wage-goods (variable capital, v); and luxuries for capitalist consumption. Under conditions of simple reproduction¹⁷, the value of luxury output is equal to total surplus value (s). The value structure of such an economy may be written as

$$\begin{aligned} c_1 + v_1 + s_1 &= c_1 + c_2 + c_3 \\ (1) \quad c_2 + v_2 + s_2 &= v_1 + v_2 + v_3 \\ c_3 + v_3 + s_3 &= s_1 + s_2 + s_3 \end{aligned}$$

Here the subscripts refer to the three sectors, or 'departments'. The equations show that the output of means of production is entirely absorbed as inputs of constant capital; the value of wage-goods equals total variable capital employed; and the value of the luxuries produced equals total surplus value.¹⁸

Marx realized that if the rate of exploitation was the same in all departments, then the rate of profit would in general *not* be equal in all departments. That is, if

$$\frac{s_1}{v_1} = \frac{s_2}{v_2} = \frac{s_3}{v_3} = e$$

$$\text{then} \quad \frac{s_1}{c_1 + v_1} = \frac{s_2}{c_2 + v_2} = \frac{s_3}{c_3 + v_3}$$

$$\text{only if} \quad \frac{c_1}{v_1} = \frac{c_2}{v_2} = \frac{c_3}{v_3}$$

that is, if the organic composition of capital is equal in all departments.¹⁹ In a fully-developed competitive capitalist economy, mobility of capital would ensure that the rate of profit in each sector would tend to equality. But it is only by accident that the organic composition will be the same in every department. Thus commodities cannot be sold at their labour values. They will be sold instead at 'prices of production' which differ systematically from values in such a way as to yield the same rate of profit throughout the economy.

The 'transformation problem' is thus to find a procedure whereby prices of production may be derived from values. Define the ratio of price of production to value, in each department, as x , y and z respectively. The price relations of the system may then be written as

$$\begin{aligned} (c_1x + v_1y)(1 + r) &= (c_1 + c_2 + c_3)x \\ (2) \quad (c_2x + v_2y)(1 + r) &= (v_1 + v_2 + v_3)y \\ (c_3x + v_3y)(1 + r) &= (s_1 + s_2 + s_3)z \end{aligned}$$

The right-hand side of equation (2) gives the price of production of the total output of each department. The left-hand side gives the sum of capital employed and used up in each sector, $(c_1x + v_1y)$, plus profits on that capital at the common rate r , $([c_1x + v_1y]r)$, both measured in prices of production. The procedure may be extended without difficulty to n departments.²⁰

Equation (2) is derived from equation (1) by multiplying c_1 , c_2 and c_3 , wherever they appear, by x ; and similarly for y and z . For each department, price of production equals value multiplied by the relevant price-value ratio. Samuelson is thus entirely correct when he states that "the well-known transformation procedure for transforming from Marxian values to competitive prices is . . . logically of the form: 'Anything' equals 'anything else' multiplied by 'anything'/'anything else'".²¹

It is not clear why Samuelson should regard this as a criticism of the labour theory of value. Yet he concludes that "such a 'transformation' is really like that in which an eraser is used to rub out an earlier entry, after which we make a new start to end up with the properly calculated entry."²² The implication here is that the value system is wrong (like the statement 'the world is flat'), and the price system is correct (like 'the world is round').²³ But this implication is quite unwarranted. All manner of transformations have the *logical form* which Samuelson has identified, without being equivalent to the substitution of truth for error. A simple example is the 'transformation' from metres to yards, which takes the form

One yard = one metre \times ratio of yards: metres

This is logically of the same form as Bortkiewicz's transformation procedure:

Price of production = value \times ratio of price of production: value

It would be absurd, however, to conclude that measurements in yards (prices of production) are "properly calculated", while measurements in metres (values) are not. They are simply calculated in different ways.

III

Labour Theory of Value

Samuelson's third line of attack is more substantial. He suggests that the labour theory of value represents an "unnecessary detour"²⁴, so that "anything...the labour theory of value can do, competitive price theory can do better and more easily".²⁵ This implies that the labour theory of value is not wrong, but unnecessary, and that the transformation procedure is not invalid, but redundant.²⁶ Samuelson's argument runs as follows.

As we have seen, in a mature competitive capitalist economy where organic compositions of capital differ, commodities are not and cannot be sold at their labour values. Thus the labour theory of value has empirical relevance only if the analysis of value is a *necessary precondition* for the analysis of prices of production. But, Samuelson argues, "competitive prices" may be derived (given the distribution of income) *directly* from the

technical structure of production so that the introduction of labour values is an unnecessary complication.

Samuelson shows²⁷ that both the value system of equation (1) and the price system of equation (2) can be expressed in terms of the standard Leontief input-output analysis. Here $a_o = [a_{oj}]$ is the row vector of direct labour inputs per unit of output, and $a = [a_{ij}]$ is the matrix of unit input coefficients of the means of production. The row vector $\pi = [\pi_j]$ denotes the unit labour values of each commodity; W is the value of labour power²⁸; and, as before, e is the rate of exploitation. Then equation (1) may be written, in the n -départment case, as

$$(3) \pi = \pi a + W a_o + e W a_o = W a_o [I - a]^{-1} (1 + e)$$

In equation (3) πa gives the value of constant capital; $W a_o$ the value of variable capital; and $e W a_o$ the surplus value produced. Had Marx possessed the relevant mathematical techniques, there is no reason why he should not have presented his analysis of the value system in exactly this manner.

The price system of equation (2) may be similarly expressed as

$$(4) P = [P a + W a_o] (1 + r) = W a_o (1 + r) [I - a (1 + r)]^{-1}$$

Here P is the row vector of unit prices of production and r , as before, is the uniform rate of profit.²⁹ The total capital employed, per unit of output and measured in prices of production, is $[P a + W a_o]$. This is equivalent to the $(c_1 x + v_1 y)$ of equation (2). Samuelson's point is that equation (4) takes *explicit* account of the technical coefficients of production given by a and a_o . It is therefore simpler and more direct than equation (2), where these technical relations are only implicit. Given a and a_o , we need only know W for r to be fully determined,³⁰ and can then calculate P *directly*. There is no need to calculate π first, and then transform values into prices of production. Equation (3) is thus *not* necessary to the solution of equation (4).

Limited Significance

This conclusion does not give any support to neoclassical economics. As Samuelson himself observed, "My vantage point in the discussion was *not* neoclassical. It was Sraffian!... what I said is exactly what Joan Robinson, no neoclassicist, has been saying all along."³¹ His analysis entails no commitment to marginal productivity theory, or any other element of bourgeois economics. On the critical question of the determinants of the rate of profit, in fact, Samuelson is agnostic.³² He does point out, however, that equation (3) is equally irrelevant to this issue. What determines r in equation (4), given a and a_o , is the fixing of W at subsistence level and this is quite independent of *any* theory of value. Income distribution may of course be determined in some other way, for example by workers' militancy and the exercise of class power. But here again the relevant values of W and r may be inserted directly into equation (4); and equation (3) is equally unnecessary.³³

Samuelson's third argument is perfectly valid, but its significance

is also very limited. In particular, three aspects of Marx's theory of value are completely unaffected by it. These concern the historical relevance of the transformation from values to prices of production; the connection between technical and social relationships; and the qualitative rather than merely quantitative role of the labour theory of value.

The first point is this. For Marx the *logical* process of transformation of the values of equation (3) into the prices of equation (4) was only part of the story. Transformation, he argued, is also an *historical* process, in which values are superseded by prices of production only as competition becomes sufficiently strong to equalize the initially unequal rates of profit in different sectors of the expanding capitalist economy. Thus equation (3) is not an erroneous version of equation (4) or even a mere approximation to it. It is its *historical predecessor*. Thus "it is quite appropriate", Marx argued, "to regard the values of commodities as not only theoretically but also historically *prior* to the prices of production".³⁴ Samuelson has demonstrated that there is no necessary theoretical priority for labour values, once equal rates of profit prevail. But his criticism is quite irrelevant to the question of historical priority.

Secondly, Samuelson interprets the a and a_0 coefficients of equations (3) and (4) as representing technical data, which are independent of human volition. For Marx, in contrast, input coefficients are not given by technology independently of the class struggle. The quantity of direct and indirect labour needed to produce a commodity depends also on the *intensity* of labour: that is, on the degree of effort which the worker exerts. The pace of work is the subject of a perpetual and bitter battle between employer and worker.³⁵ Samuelson says nothing about this.

Thirdly, Samuelson does not understand that Marx intended the labour theory of value to do much more than simply determine numerical exchange ratios between commodities. At a more fundamental level, it explains how exchange itself reflects the social division of labour in a commodity-producing economy: "whenever by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them"³⁶. Failure to recognize this means that "the social character of labour appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves"³⁷. This 'fetishism of commodities'³⁸ is most clearly reflected in demand-oriented, utility 'theories' of value.

Commodity Fetishism

Thus for Marx there are *two* problems of value.³⁹ The *quantitative* problem is to determine the actual numerical ratios at which commodities exchange. As Samuelson has shown, in the later stages of capitalist development—though not in simple commodity production nor in early capitalism—the labour theory of value is not necessary for a solution to this problem. The *qualitative* problem is to discover why it is that commodities can be

reduced, through exchange, to a common denominator in the first place. The labour theory of value remains necessary to a solution of this problem, which Samuelson does not discuss at all.

It is, however, possible that Samuelson would accept the qualitative aspect of the labour theory of value. It is certainly noticeable that utility plays very little part in his analysis. But he would probably dismiss the whole question as obvious and trivial. In fact it is neither, as Marx shows when he applies the concept of commodity fetishism to income distribution. On this point Samuelson's position is, to say the least, ambiguous.

Commodity fetishism is present when the existence of non-wage incomes is attributed to the physical productivity of the means of production, whether produced ('capital') or natural ('land'). Marx's attack was concentrated on the "vulgar economists" of his own day, for whom "it becomes a property of money to generate value and yield interest, much as it is an attribute of pear-trees to bear pears".⁴⁰ His argument is both simple and undeniable. The means of production yield profits, interest and rent only when they are privately owned by a minority class in a specific (capitalist) form of social system. The produced means of production become 'capital' *only* when they are privately owned and used to employ wage-labour.⁴¹ It is their social, rather than their purely material, attributes which are crucial.

Thus the categories of income distribution depend on the structure of social relations, and differ in different modes of production. In feudal and slave-owning societies it is immediately obvious that those who do not work derive their incomes from the surplus labour of those who do. In capitalism, however, exploitation is hidden by the semblance of "free exchange" in the market for labour power,⁴² and it is possible for vulgar "productivity" theories of income distribution to win acceptance. As Baumol⁴³ notes in his comments on Samuelson (1971), the primary purpose of Marx's analysis of transformation was to demystify the social relations of capitalism, and to expose vulgar economics for the fetishistic nonsense which it is.

Baumol observes that Marx anticipated and exposed the apologetics propounded by neoclassical theorists at the turn of the century. It would have been easy for Samuelson to have dissociated himself from their fallacy. It is significant that he nowhere does so, contenting himself with the (correct) quantitative statement that (given W) the share and rate of profits can be calculated directly from equation (4) without reference to equation (3).⁴⁴ There is no indication that Samuelson himself repudiates commodity fetishism in the qualitative theory of income distribution.

IV

It may be said in conclusion that Samuelson's attack on Marx is considerably less far-reaching than he himself appears to believe. His first criticism is both valid and important, casting serious doubts on Marx's analysis of technical change and the role of the industrial reserve army.

His second "criticism", however, is not really a criticism at all. His third criticism, while it has shown that the quantitative labour theory of value is redundant in mature capitalism, does not vitiate the historical significance of transformation, nor the interconnection specified by Marx between technical and social relationships, nor the qualitative significance of the labour theory of value in exposing commodity fetishism in bourgeois economic theory. Samuelson is an excellent technician, but he is not a political economist at all.

(The author is grateful for the helpful criticism of colleagues V Balasubramanyam, R Whittaker and M C Howard of the University of Leicester.)

- ¹ P A Samuelson, "The 'Transformation' from Marxian 'Values' to Competitive 'Prices': A Process of Rejection and Replacement", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol 67, Part 1, September 1970, pp 423-5; "Understanding the Marxian Notion of Exploitation: a Summary of the So-Called Transformation Problem between Marxian Values and Competitive Prices", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol 9, Part 2, June 1971, pp 399-431; "The Economics of Marx: An Ecumenical Reply" *ibid.*, Vol 10, Part 1, March 1972, pp 51-7; Samuelson's "Reply on Marxian Matters" *ibid.*, Vol 11, Part 1, March 1973, pp 64-8; "Insight and Detour in the Theory of Exploitation: a Reply to Baumol", *ibid.*, Vol 12, Part 1, March 1974, pp 51-62; "Rejoinder: Merlin Unclothed, a Final Word", *ibid.*, Vol 12, Part 1, March 1974, pp 75-7; "Karl Marx as a Mathematical Economist", G Horwich and P A Samuelson (Eds.) *Trade, Stability and Macroeconomics: Essays in Honour of Lloyd Metzler*, Academic Press, New York 1974, pp 269-307. These are cited below as Samuelson (1970), (1971), (1972), (1973), (1974a), (1974b) and (1974c) respectively.
- ² See M Bronfenbrenner, "Samuelson, Marx and Their Latest Critics", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol 11, Part 1, March 1973, pp 58-63.
- ³ This is part of the title of Samuelson (1970).
- ⁴ K Marx, *Capital*, Vol I, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1970, p 639.
- ⁵ Marx argues that the industrial reserve army maintains real wages at the value of labour power. Although the value of labour power has a "historical and moral element" (*ibid.*, p 171), a careful reading of chapter XXV of *Capital*, Volume I, leaves no doubt that Marx anticipated no substantial or sustained increase in real wages. See also R L Meek, "Marx's Doctrine of Increasing Misery", in his *Economics and Ideology*, Chapman and Hall, London 1967, pp 113-28.
- ⁶ See Joan Robinson, *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, Macmillan, London 1942, chapter V.
- ⁷ Marx repeatedly emphasizes that his theory of the falling rate of profit rests on increased labour productivity, and contrasts his analysis with that of Ricardo, which depends on declining productivity in agriculture. See, for example, K Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Vol II, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1969, pp 463-4.
- ⁸ Since $r = \frac{s}{c + v} = \frac{s/v}{c/v + v/v} = \frac{c}{k + 1}$
- ⁹ Marx himself countered this objection by suggesting that while the rate of increase of c would eventually decline, k would increase at an increasing rate, so that after some point, r would fall. See R L Meek, "The Falling Rate of Profit", in *Economics and Ideology*, pp 129-42.
- ¹⁰ See especially Samuelson (1972).
- ¹¹ P Sraffa, *The Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1960.
- ¹² That is, $\frac{dw}{dr} < 0$; but $\frac{d^2w}{dr^2}$, $\frac{d^3w}{dr^3}$, etc., may be positive, negative or zero, depending on the technical coefficients of production. See also P Garegnani, "Hetero-

- geneous Capital, the Production Function and the Theory of Capital", *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol 38, 1970, pp 407-36.
- ¹³ A formal proof of this argument is given by N Okishio, "A Mathematical Note on Marxian Theorems", *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, Vol 91, 1963, pp 287-98.
- ¹⁴ Bronfenbrenner, *op.cit.*, p 62.
- ¹⁵ See M Mukherjee, "Share of Agricultural Labour in National Income", *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol 9, Part 4, April 1974, pp 475-92. Landlords may hesitate to introduce innovations which increase the rate of profit for fear that they will also reduce the peasant's indebtedness, and thus diminish the returns to usury. On this see A Bhaduri, "A Study in Agricultural Backwardness under Semi-Feudalism", *Economic Journal*, Vol 83, March 1973, pp 120-37.
- ¹⁶ L Von Bortkiewicz, "On the Correction of Marx's Fundamental Theoretical Construction in the Third Volume of *Capital*," in E Bohm-Bawerk, *Karl Marx and the Close of His System*, P M Sweezy (Ed.). Kelley, New York 1966, pp 199-221; P M Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*, Dobson, London 1946, chapter 7.
- ¹⁷ In simple reproduction net investment is zero, and capitalists consume the whole of their net income.
- ¹⁸ I assume throughout, as do Bortkiewicz and Samuelson, that both constant and variable capital turn over exactly once per production period, so that the *stocks* of constant and variable capital employed are entirely *used up* in the course of each period.
- ¹⁹ In department *i* the rate of profit is $r_i = e_i / 1 + k_i$ (see note 8). If $e_1 = e_2 = e_3 = e$, $r_1 = e/k_1 + 1$, and $r_1 = r_2 = r_3$ only if $k_1 = k_2 = k_3$.
- ²⁰ See F Seton, "The 'Transformation Problem'", *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol 24, Part 3, June 1957, pp 149-60.
- ²¹ Samuelson (1970), p 423.
- ²² Samuelson (1971), p 421.
- ²³ See Samuelson (1973), p 65, where Samuelson facetiously suggests an alternative transformation, from 'gibberish' to values.
- ²⁴ Samuelson (1971) p 421.
- ²⁵ Bronfenbrenner, *op.cit.*, p 58.
- ²⁶ Thus by implication, it is inconsistent with his second argument, which claims that the labour theory of value is invalid.
- ²⁷ The following paragraphs use the notation of Samuelson (1970). Samuelson (1974c) gives a more comprehensive mathematical treatment, with slightly different notation.
- ²⁸ Where $m = [m_1]$ is the column vector of subsistence wage-goods, $W = \pi m$ is the value of labour power.
- ²⁹ Equation (4) is closely related to the system formulated by Sraffa, *op.cit.*, Note that in this case $W = Pm$, the *price* of labour power.
- ³⁰ Given W , we can read off r from the wage-profit frontier.
- ³¹ Samuelson (1973) p 64.
- ³² Samuelson (1974c) p 288, makes this very clear: "I do not wish to pronounce any opinion at this time on whether Marx was insightful or obtuse in regarding the profit component of price and NNP as being undetermined by mainstream bourgeois political economy".
- ³³ Samuelson (1973), p 67.
- ³⁴ K Marx, *Capital*, Vol III Lawrence and Wishart, London 1962, p 174. See also R L Meek, *Studies in the Labour Theory of Value* 'Introduction' to the second edition, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1973.
- ³⁵ See for example, *Capital*, Vol I., pp 409-17.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p 74.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 74.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 72.

- ³⁹ See P M Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development*, pp 23-5.
- ⁴⁰ *Capital*, Vol III, p 384.
- ⁴¹ See *Capital*, Vol III, chapter 48.
- ⁴² See K Marx, "Wages, Price and Profit", Part IX, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol 1, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1962, pp 428-30; M H Dobb, *Political Economy and Capitalism*, Routledge, London 1937, chapter III.
- ⁴³ W J Baumol, "The Transformation of Values: What Marx 'Really' Meant (An Interpretation)" *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol 12, Part 1, March 1974, pp 51-62 ,
- ⁴⁴ See Samuelson (1974b).

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD

Some Problems of Indian History

ALTHOUGH historians claim to be 'impartial', 'objective' and interested only in 'discovering the truth', their work invariably reflects the point of view of the particular class or group with which they are associated. There are historians who represent the viewpoint of particular religious communities, regional, linguistic or cultural groups, each with its own approach to the problems of the history and culture of India.

The conflicting interests represented by historians therefore produce their own particular versions leading to the emergence of corresponding schools of history: like that which lauds the greatness of the Aryan civilization to the exclusion of all others; or decries the Aryan civilization while lauding the Dravidian. Thus we have communal or religious historians who look at India's past and present from the Maratha or Islamic angles, for example.

Historians other than those guided by the theory of historical materialism are handicapped by the fact that they do not see the history of human society as one of man's struggle against nature in the course of which he enters into mutual relations with other members of society. Nor do they perceive that these mutual relations become what are known as relations of conflict between the exploiting and exploited classes. In the celebrated words of the founders of historical materialism,

The history of all hitherto existing society, is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome, we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.¹

Historical Materialism

The classical work of scientific socialism *Manifesto of the Communist Party* from which the above passage has been quoted, traces the epoch-making changes in the technique of production which destroyed the feudal society of the Middle Ages and gave birth to the modern bourgeois society. Explaining the process through which capitalism develops and inexorably goes on to its inevitable replacement by a new system, namely, socialism, it traces the origin, growth and the inevitable crisis facing the ruling class of capitalist society—the bourgeoisie. The penetrating analysis of the development of capitalism and its inherent contradictions and crises lead the authors to the following conclusion:

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.²

The history of India and of its freedom movement should deal with the changes that are always taking place in the techniques of production or the manner in which man tries to control nature; it should explain how

changes in the technique of production give rise to changes in the relations of production or to transformations of existing classes, the formation of new classes and the conflicts between various (old and new) classes. It is this basic approach of looking upon the history of all human society as the history of class struggles that is lacking in historical writings on India with, of course, very few honourable exceptions.

Here it is proposed to trace the immediate consequences of foreign (British) impact or, in other words, how the representatives of the new capitalist society came from outside and subjugated the Indian people, how they destroyed the basic institutions of Indian society handed down through the centuries, dislodged the ruling classes of India and ruined the toiling people. The conflict between this new alien ruling class on the one hand, and the representatives of the old ruling classes and the mass of people on the other, erupted into a series of resistance actions culminating in the countrywide revolt of 1857; the defeat of that revolt symbolized the defeat of the old Indian society and the victory of the new, vigorous but alien society.

Ancient Heritage a Liability

Nationalist-minded historians and publicists are proud of India's past. They claim that Indian society was superior in all respects to the Europe of the medieval period. The destruction of that society by the foreign rulers was, in their view, the violent act of an alien regime which created acute misery for our people.

Militant nationalists like Tilak as well as renowned leaders of the fighting masses like Mahatma Gandhi had in fact combined nationalism with revivalism of various shades and forms. The militant use of Ganesh Puja by Tilak and of the Charkha by Gandhi and the latter's slogan of 'back to the villages' illustrate the manner in which the leaders of the freedom movement tried to integrate the mass national movement for freedom with the nostalgic vision of reviving the 'glories of ancient India'.

The question, however, arises: if India had such a glorious heritage; if pre-British society in India was superior to societies in the rest of the world (particularly those of medieval Europe), why is it that 'less civilized' nations, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English, transformed themselves from the traders they were in the beginning into conquerors with arms in hand? How were the ruling classes of the 'superior' Indian society obliged to seek the help of these 'less civilized' nations, so that in the end the strongest of them, the English, became the supreme rulers of the country?

To raise these questions is, of course, not to deny that India has an ancient civilization—a civilization which is among the earliest and most glorious in human history. The Indus Valley Civilization, on which a growing body of evidence has accumulated thanks to the painstaking research of a host of scholars, is something which no European land of that epoch can match. Even after the destruction of that civilization,

India went through a process of development which puts this country among the most advanced in ancient and medieval history.

The fact however remains that this country with such a glorious past in the ancient and medieval periods came to lag behind the rest of the world particularly Europe, when the modern epoch of human history opened. This alone can explain why a handful of European merchants, organizing as an association of traders to defend themselves and their trading interests, were able to intrude into the economy and polity of this country, use one feudatory chieftain in India against another, and ultimately establish their dominance.

An objective study of the history of India's freedom movement should, therefore, begin with the problems: what was the nature of pre-British society? What were its weaknesses? How did these weaknesses arise and develop so that the alien merchants could use them in order to destroy the existing socio-economic system and political regime and replace them by an alien system?

Marx on Pre-British India

Historians, both British and Indian, agree that social development in India proceeded in a manner different from that of Europe. From primitive communism to slavery, from slavery to feudalism, and from feudalism to capitalism—such was the pattern of development in Europe. Transition from one stage to the next involved huge convulsions, conflicts, confrontations, and revolutionary outbreaks. India, on the other hand, had a relatively uninterrupted development, the social order being subjected to steady, slow and painfully retarded transformations. As Karl Marx pointed out in one of his penetrating studies on the nature of Indian society before the British overlordship,

all the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. *This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present mystery of the Hindu, and separates Hindustan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history.*³ (Emphasis added).

Historians and publicists of the nationalist persuasion would, in a way, sail along with the above assessment in as much as they pride themselves on the fact that the ancient civilization of the country continued uninterrupted till the British came and violently destroyed it. Where they differ from Marx is that they do not see that the system which continued uninterrupted through several centuries had to be destroyed if the country and its people were to advance. Marx was clear that Indian society, as it existed before the British subjugated it to their rule, could not continue its development. For,

the paramount power of the Great Mogul was broken by Mogul Viceroy. The power of the Viceroy was broken by the Mahrattas. The power of the Mahrattas was broken by the Afghans, and while all were struggling against all, the Briton rushed in and was enabled to subdue them all. A country not only divided between Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest? If we knew nothing of the past history of Hindustan, would there not be the one great and incontestable fact, that even at this moment India is held in English thralldom by an Indian army maintained at the cost of India? India, then, could not escape the fate of being conquered, and the whole of her past history, if it be anything, is the history of the successive conquests she has undergone.⁴

A host of scholars who have gone into the question of how Indian society came to be formed in historical times have come to the conclusion that, instead of the old primitive communist tribal society being replaced by slave society as in Europe, India developed a distinctive type of society combining the three 'basic social institutions', the joint family, the caste, and the village community.

Distinctive Social Structure

These three 'basic social institutions' were by no means free from the social oppression and economic exploitation which characterized the slave and feudal societies of ancient Greece or Rome or of medieval Europe. The social oppression and economic exploitation were covered up in the ancient and medieval Indian society by the three 'basic social institutions' which guaranteed some rights to the individual members of the family, the caste and the village community. The eminent sociologist, Iravati Karve, assessed Indian society in its development as follows:

This society had brought to near perfection *a mode of self-government which needed the least supervision from a central power*. The caste had a cell-like structure, but for subsistence as a caste it needed a certain type of contact and give-and-take with people of other castes. *A village was an almost perfect cell as an area of subsistence which was self-sufficient, independent and isolated from others through its very individuality*. In the village the articulation of each caste to the others became defined and through this was developed *an amazing system of self-regulation which needed almost no central supervision and withstood all central interference*. The regulation was local and atomic. The caste society had two kinds of structures which cut across each other without coming into conflict. The principle of regulation of the caste from within was the principle which led together and regulated the kin. This involved the localized patrilineal or matrilineal family (joint or

non-joint) living under one roof, the lineages living as neighbours and the whole web of blood and affinal kinship represented by caste. *The father of the family, the most important members of the most important lineages and caste-elders were the centres of authority. The village represented the system by which inter-caste intercourse was regulated.*⁶ (Emphasis added.)

How did such a society come into existence? Answering this question would require a painstaking study of all the available material as well as the collection of a mass of new material on the subject. We leave such a detailed study, which alone could lead to definitive conclusions, to scholars who are competent to carry it out. In the present state of knowledge, we merely advance this working hypothesis: taking its birth as it did at the dawn of history—that is, when the primitive communist tribal society was broken up and class society was formed—the particular form of class society, the ‘varna-caste system’, was flexible enough to accommodate within its framework elements of the slave and the feudal societies.

The early phase of this new class society was marked by the predominance of class relations analogous to, though differing in material respects from, the master-slave relations. Subsequently, as social transformations took place and property in land (though of a sort different from that of medieval Europe) developed, the relations between the higher and the lower castes assumed the character of the serf-tenant and his master analogous to, though different from, the feudal society of Europe in the Middle Ages.

Advent of Extraneous Capitalism

The development of feudalism in India, to a stage where elements of capitalism began to appear, could also be accommodated to a certain extent. But, unlike in the earlier phases, the further development of the techniques of production, the monetization of the economy, the development of capitalist production relations and so on necessitated the breakup of the whole system. That is why the forces of capitalist society coming from abroad found the soil fertile for their own domination, while the indigenous forces found it impossible to resist this onslaught from outside.

It is necessary at this stage to refer to an idea that is prevalent about pre-British Indian society—the idea that this society has been ‘unchanging.’ It is of course true that neither the village community, nor the caste, nor the joint family has changed in its *form*: in this sense each of them has been ‘unchanging.’ But, while remaining ‘unchanging’ *in form*, such modifications have taken place in their *content* that new techniques and relations of production could be adjusted within them.

This ability of the ‘unchanging’ society to absorb the ever-recurring changes in the techniques and relations of production was at once its strength and its weakness. Its strength consisted in the fact that, despite the apparently stagnant character of pre-British Indian society, the technique of production and cultural development (both literary and

scientific) were in certain respects equal, if not superior, to those of medieval Europe. Its weakness consisted in the fact that, in the new epoch of human history, when European society overthrew feudalism and established capitalism, the rising force of the new epoch, capitalism, could not develop within it; and in the fact that when the representatives of the new, capitalist social order went forth from their original European homes to India (and to other Asian countries) the new techniques and relations of production brought by them could not be accommodated within the existing Indian society.

The role played by capitalism in the revolutionary transformation of human society was assessed by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* as follows:

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?⁶

Regeneration v. Revivalism

The class which brought about such revolutionary transformations in human history having come to India (as of course to other Asian countries having similar social organizations as of India) was dealing with a society which had never had any serious political convulsion or comprehensive revolution. The new relations of production which were slowly but steadily being forged could not be accommodated within a centuries-old social order. The very process of trade which brought the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English into India undermined the basis of the 'unique type of society' whose formation at the dawn of history had made India different from other countries. To quote Marx once again:

Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moguls, who had successively overrun India, soon became Hinduized, the barbarian conquerors being, by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superior civilization of their subjects. The British were the first conquerors superior, and, therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilization. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun.⁷

The essence of the *work of regeneration* referred to by Marx is the origin and growth of new classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletarians—and the role they played in the building of the new society. The

'regeneration' could not take place without the destruction of the old. In other words, it is totally irrelevant to equate freedom and nationalism with revivalism.

- ¹ K Marx and F Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965, pp 39-41.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp 49 and 59.
- ³ K Marx, "The British Rule in India," in Marx and Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence 1857-1859*, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, p 16.
- ⁴ K Marx, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India", *ibid.*, p 33.
- ⁵ Iravati Karve, in *Changing India: Essays in Honour of Professor D R Gadgil*, pp 146-47.
- ⁶ K Marx and F Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *op cit.*, p 47.
- ⁷ K Marx, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India", *op cit.*, p 34.

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

Origin and Development of Islam

THE religion of Islam has to be studied against its historical and social background if one subscribes to the theory that the socio-economic formations of a period replicate themselves in an ideological movement. As Maxim Rodinson points out in his book, *Mohammed*,

there are those whose enthusiasm has rendered them incapable of seeing anything in the development of ideas beyond complete, perfect and well-ordered systems appearing mysteriously in place of others of the same kind. What I am trying to show here is that an ideology was, on the contrary, built up from the elements imposed on a man by his situation and adopted by a society by reason of its situation.¹

There has hardly been any attempt in India, or for that matter in any other country, to analyse the available material on Islam which is by no means scarce, and to put one of the most significant religious movements in its proper perspective. I propose in this article to examine some of the socio-economic factors which can be said to have decisively influenced the birth of Islam.

Arabia is the south-western peninsula of Asia, the largest peninsula on the world map.² Geologists are of the opinion that the land once was the natural continuation of the Sahara (now separated from it by the rift

of the Nile valley and the great chasm of the Red Sea) and of the sandy belt which traverses Asia through central Persia and the Gobi desert. With the exception of the mountains and highlands, the land consists mainly of desert and sand-covered plains between the hills. Agriculture is scanty and sporadic, providing a subsistence to a limited number of people. It just could not have produced enough surplus for the flowering of a brilliant civilization. Within the Arab world, one can easily identify three zones that differ widely from each other in social structure and in political and economic organization: the Arab East which includes Syria (embracing the present-day states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel), and Iraq; the countries of the Nile which means Egypt and the Sudan; and the Arab West stretching from Libya to the Atlantic and including present-day states of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. Egypt alone in this group has always been, and still is, the peasant civilization although it may not have been feudal in the customary sense.

South Arabian Civilization

On the peninsula itself, southern Arabia has its own distinct features. The division between south and north was a significant one: Joel Carmichael says in his book, *The Shaping of the Arabs*:

The division may be rooted in the factual situation of the nomadism of the peoples of the north and the sedentary and agricultural condition of the south. This division was felt to be so strong indeed, that it served the fourteenth century Arab historian Ibn-Khaldun as the framework of his whole view of world history, which he conceived of as the result of the reciprocal interaction between the Bedouin and the city dwellers.³

In southern Arabia there were highly developed civilizations, Sabaeen, Minaean, and Qatabanian, based on agriculture and spice traffic; and trade with the outside world brought prosperity to its people more than a thousand years before Christ. The Arab kingdoms in the south dammed the water courses, built castles and temples, and developed agriculture to a remarkable degree. They pushed their trade centres far into the north.⁴ In historical times wave after wave of Arabs came up from southern and central Arabia and found their way into the settled lands of the fertile crescent, urged on by poverty and hunger.

Settlements and oases can support only a limited number of inhabitants; the pasturage of the steppes can feed only a limited number of camels and herds, and when that number is exceeded a war of conquest or annual raids on the settlements become the only alternatives to starvation. The great conquests of Islam of north-east and north-west countries with the help of the Bedouins of the desert represent a similar phenomenon of increasing pressure on the land resulting in mass migration towards the north. This had repeatedly happened in the history of the Arabs. Whenever some calamity afflicted the south, people migrated towards the north in search of livelihood. The breaking of the great dam of Ma'rib is one

such occasion which has been immortalized in Islamic literature. Al-Isfahani,⁶ who devotes the eighth book of his annals, which was finished in AD 961, to Himyarite kings, puts this event four hundred years before Islam. But, it seems, Yaqut comes nearer the truth when he assigns it to the reign of the Abyssinians. The breach apparently was then restored. But the final catastrophe alluded to in the *Koran* (34:15) may have taken place after AD 542 and before 570 according to Philips Hitti.⁶ This breach dealt a severe blow to the sedentary civilization of southern Arabia. R A Nicholson says

Mention has frequently been made of the bursting of the Dyke of Ma'rib, which caused an extensive movement of Yemenite stocks to the north. The invaders halted in the Hijaz, and, having almost exterminated the Jurhumites, resumed their journey. One group, however, the Banu Khuza'a, led by their chief Luhayy, settled in the neighbourhood of Mecca.⁷

In his correspondence with Marx, Engels has also taken note of this fact. He says.

This artificial fertilization of the land which immediately ceased when the irrigation system fell into decay, explains the otherwise curious fact that whole stretches which were once brilliantly cultivated are now waste and bare (Palmyra, Petta, the ruins in the Yemen, districts in Egypt, Persia and Hindustan); it explains the fact that one single devastating war could depopulate a country for centuries and strip it of its whole civilization. Here too, I think, comes in the destruction of the south Arabian trade before Mohammed, which you very rightly regard as one of the chief factors in the Mohammedan revolution.⁸

New Town on Trade Route

This massive movement of population towards Hijaz, central Arabia and the north had its own economic repercussions. There were other factors, too. Due to constant friction between the Byzantine and Persian empires the trade routes were in a state of flux. It was ultimately the evolution of the trade routes that brought about zigzags and unpredictable fluctuations in the history of the Arabs. In the latter half of the sixth century A D, for instance, the Euphrates-Persian trade route, which had hitherto benefited from the commerce between the Mediterranean lands and the east, was encumbered and made dangerous by the constant friction between the Byzantine and Persian empires with concomitant tariffs, political rivalries and general chaos. Egypt too was in a state of disarray, and, consequently, it could not have provided an alternative route. Businessmen had to take another peaceful although more difficult route leading from Syria down through western Arabia to the Yemenite ports that served the Indian trade. Yemen itself fell under foreign rule and by this time Palmyra and Nabatea in the north had disappeared. This was the right time for Mecca to fill a socio-economic vacuum thus created. Mecca

had arisen in the first place because of its location along the spice route between southern and northern Arabia: it was probably a half-way station, favoured as the hub of lines leading to the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea through Jidda, and overseas to Africa.⁹ At this point it is important to note that Arabia could be divided into two parts: a) the urban and b) the nomadic. Mecca was one of the principal urban centres where complex commercial operations were carried out.

The people who inhabited these urban areas were originally of nomadic stock. The urbanization of the Bedouins (Arab nomads) also had a long history. Faced with acute economic crisis or long spells of drought, they would migrate and invade the fertile areas to the north. Thus Engels, in a letter to Marx, refers to this when he says:

With regard to the great Arabian invasion, of which we spoke previously: the Bedouins made periodic invasions, just like the Mongols, the Assyrian Empire as well as the Babylonian was founded by Bedouin tribes, on the same spot where later the Caliphate of Baghdad arose. The founders of the Babylonian Empire, the Chaldeans, still exist under the same name, Beni Chaled (Beni Khaled?) in the same locality.¹⁰

Mecca was fast developing into an important, in fact the most important, commercial centre. It had grown into the intellectual and political leader of western Arabia. As H A R Gibb observes:

A busy and wealthy commercial town, almost monopolizing the entrepot trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, it recalls Palmyra without the flashy Greek veneer. Its citizens, while preserving a certain native Arab simplicity in their manners and institutions, had acquired a wide knowledge of men and cities in their intercourse, commercial and diplomatic with Arab tribesmen and Roman officials.¹¹

The nomadic tribal structure, under the pressure of new commercial pattern of life, was disintegrating and a new relationship, cutting across the tribal barriers, was evolving. The understanding of this phenomenon is essential to grasp the significance of the movement which emerged in the shape of Islam. Let us first understand the tribal scene which made no mean contribution to the Islamic ideology, although, it was, in no sense, its desiderative expression.

Bedouins on the Move

Ibn-Khaldun, a versatile genius and a very perceptive and analytical historian of the fourteenth century Arabia, has devoted a whole chapter of his *Muqaddimah* to the Bedouins and their characteristics. He compares and contrasts them with other tribals and their ways of life. According to him,

...the Bedouins are a savage nation, fully accustomed to savagery and the things that cause it. Savagery has become their character and nature. They enjoy it, because it means freedom from authority and

no subservience to leadership. Such a natural disposition is the negation and antithesis of civilization. All the customary activities of the Bedouins lead to wandering and movement. This is the antithesis and negation of stationariness, which produces civilization...Furthermore, it is their nature to plunder whatever other people possess. Their sustenance lies wherever the shadow of their lances falls. They recognize no limit in taking the possessions of other people. Whenever their eyes fall upon some property, furnishings, or utensils, they take them..Furthermore, every Bedouin is eager to be the leader. There is scarcely one among them who would cede his power to another, even to his father, his brother or the eldest member of his family.¹²

The Bedouins were largely dependent on camel and they moved around more and had to make deeper inroads into the desert in search of pasturage as the hilly pastures with their plants and shrubs did not provide enough subsistence for camels. Thus they became eminently suited to cross an otherwise inaccessible stretch of desert. For long-distance trade caravans passing through the deserts of western Arabia, the hardy Bedouins became indispensable. According to R. A. Nicholson,

the tribal constitution was a democracy guided by its chief men, who derived their authority from blood, noble character, wealth, wisdom and experience. The chiefs, however, dared not lay commands or penalties on their fellow tribesmen. Every man ruled himself, and was free to rebuke presumption in others. 'If you are our lord' (if you act discreetly as a sayyid should), 'you will lord over us but if you are a prey to pride, go and be proud!' (we will have nothing to do with you).¹²

Loyalty in the mouth of a pagan Arab did not mean allegiance to his superiors, but faithful devotion to his equals; and it was closely connected with the idea of kinship. The family and the tribe, which included strangers living in the tribe under a covenant or protection—to defend these, individually and collectively, was a sacred duty. Honour required that a man should stand by his own people through thick and thin.¹⁴

Mecca, Cradle of Islam

Mecca lies in a gorge in a range of mountains, black and yellow, bare, rocky, sharp and jagged with no scrap of soil and running parallel to the coast. The valley has been carved out by the wadi, fed by violent but erratic rainstorms which at times cause heavy flooding. Here, no agriculture is possible. The valley of Mecca is arid and barren. Long before the Christian era, two main trading centres had evolved: Macoraba (Mecca) and, some distance north, Yathrippa (Yathrib). Mecca was a well-known 'sanctuary' close to the well of Zamzam which supplied the settlement with water. It was admirably situated at the junction of a road going North to South, from Palestine to the Yemen, with others from East to West, connecting the Red Sea coast and the route to Ethiopia from the Persian Gulf. This trading centre was a safe haven from the devastating blood-

feuds among various tribes as custom did not permit molestation in this sanctuary. The merchants got the necessary security from the ravaging plunders of the Bedouins.

By the end of the fifth century, a strong man called Qusayy gained control of the town and the temple. He belonged to the tribe of Quraysh, an assemblage of various clans which, through him, supplanted the Khuza'a. Probably Qusayy brought back from Syria the cult of the goddesses al'-Uzza and Manat, and combined it with that of Hubal, the idol of Khuza'a. The traditional legend tells us that the four sons of Abd Manaf, one of Qusayy's sons, had divided among themselves the areas where trade could be developed. One went to Persia, others to Ethiopia, Yemen and Byzantine Syria. The tribe of Quraysh did everything to promote the commercial development of Mecca and in course of time became the most dominant tribe so much so that it considered its prerogative to rule after the death of the Prophet by coining the tradition that the Caliph could be only from amongst the Quraysh though this militated against the concept of equal rights accorded to all Muslims irrespective of their tribal origin. The later Kharjite movement was, among other things, inspired by the egalitarian ideals of the Bedouins. It was a revolt against the monopoly of power by the townsmen in general and the Quraysh in particular.

Commercial Oligopoly

Thus by about the sixth century, the tribe of Quraysh succeeded in establishing their commercial hegemony. Their caravans travelled far and wide to the cardinal points of international trade. The leading merchants of Mecca had grown extremely rich and controlled the commanding heights of the mercantile economy. The merchants from different nations gathered at Mecca to launch new enterprises. It had also gathered a vast body of craftsmen who depended on the rich merchants of Mecca for their livelihood. According to W Montgomery Watt,

Mecca was more than mere trading centre, it was a financial centre... But it is clear that financial operations of considerable complexity were carried on at Mecca. The leading men of Mecca in Muhammed's time were above all financiers skilful in the manipulations of credit, shrewd in their speculations, and interested in any potentialities of lucrative investment from Aden to Gaza or Damascus. In the financial net that they had woven not merely were all the inhabitants of Mecca caught, but many notables of the surrounding area also. The Quran appeared not in the atmosphere of the desert, but in that of high finance.¹⁶

It is important to note that the city of Mecca did not have any traditional organ of government, bureaucracy or standing army. In fact, though the tribal structure was disintegrating, the nomadic influences were quite strong. The only organ of government in Mecca was the senate or *mala*. The senate mainly consisted of the representatives of various clans. Another point to note is that the council was only a deliberative

body and had no executive of its own. Moreover, each constituent clan was theoretically independent and therefore, was not bound by any of its decisions. The only effective decisions were unanimous ones. No taxes were levied or collected. One of the important contributions of the Prophet was to develop a state machinery which, of course, remained in primitive shape during his own lifetime. The Arabs, even in the primarily commercial city of Mecca, were, although partially, under the influence of certain tribal institutions. The commercial oligopoly did, at the most, tolerate institutions like the senate. It was quite averse to kingship, as any other commercial society. Feudalism and kingship can develop only in an agricultural society. The surplus in the trading city of Mecca came not from agriculture, but from long-distance commerce. Consequently, the socio-economic formations were completely different from those of an agricultural society.

The absence of solar calendar in Islam can also be explained on this basis: In an agricultural society the forecast of seasons and rains is vital for farming operations, and seasons are integrally linked to solar movements. In a non-agricultural society like that of Mecca, solar calendar does not fulfil any economic function and it was not felt necessary to develop it. The lunar month is easy to observe even with naked eyes and entails no astronomical calculations. The fact that in the lunar calendar, months are not linked with seasons is not of much economic significance in a desert country or commercial society like Mecca. Certain months, in whichever season they fall, were declared sacred and the sanctity of these months was strictly observed. Strict observance was an economic necessity as all the inter-tribal hostilities completely ceased during these months and the people gathered at Mecca for annual pilgrimage making it a beehive of commercial activity. Hence the importance of pilgrimage to Mecca before and after the Prophet. Of course, after the monumental conquests of agriculturally rich foreign lands, the centre of power gravitated to Syria (during Umayyad Caliph Mu'aviya's time), and later on to Baghdad (during Abbaside's time). Both these cities were located in fertile regions and were closer to the Byzantine and Sassanid empires respectively. After the shift in power centre, Mecca lost its importance as a centre of trade and was relegated to secondary place while retaining its religious sanctity.

Squalor behind Prosperity

Immediately before the Prophet of Islam appeared on the scene, the tribal pattern of life in Mecca was changing under the impact of commercial life. Tribal solidarity was weakening with the norms of tribal life neglected by the affluent and powerful merchants. The poor tribes and slaves, mostly of foreign origin, subjected to economic hardships, nursed a sense of grievance against the dominating tribes. Thus, says H A R Gibbs, there was a darker side to the prosperity of Mecca. It displayed the familiar evils of a wealthy commercial society, extremes of wealth

and poverty, an underworld of slaves and hirelings, social class barriers. It is clear from Mohammed's fervent denunciations of social injustice and fraud that this was one of the deep inner causes of his unsettlement. But the ferment within him did not break out in the preaching of social revolution; it was thrust instead into a religious channel and issued in a deep and unshakable conviction that he was called by God to proclaim to his fellow-citizens the old warning of the Semitic prophets: "Repent, for the judgment of God is at hand."¹⁶

There are number of verses in the Koran which denounce the evils of riches: "Let no misers who hoard the gifts of Allah think that their avarice is good for them; it is nothing but evil. The riches which they have piled shall become their fetters on the Day of Resurrection. It is Allah who will inherit the heavens and the earth. He is cognizant of all your actions."¹⁷ Again in another verse is the warning:

As for the unbelievers, neither their riches nor their children shall in the least protect them from His scourge. They are the heirs of Hell and there they shall remain for ever. The wealth they spend in this world is like a freezing wind that smites the cornfields of men who have wronged themselves, laying them waste. Allah is not unjust to them; they are unjust to them; they are unjust to their own souls.¹⁸

Individualism Breaks Tribal Humanism

Many such verses could be cited to show Mohammed's concern for the underdogs of his society. The tribal structure was disintegrating in a developing commercial society and individualism was assuming more importance in the commercial milieu of Mecca. The newly emergent pattern of individualism is obvious from the behaviour of various persons as recorded in the early history of Islam. The tendency to individualism and away from tribal solidarity was fostered in the commercial environment of Mecca. So we find frequent instances of men acting in opposition to their clans. Abu Lahab adopted a different attitude towards Mohammed from most of the rest of Hashim. Mohammed's earliest followers became Muslims despite the disapproval of their clans, and even of their parents. Business partnerships, it is important to note, seem sometimes to have cut across clan relationships.¹⁹ Further, Montgomery Watt has very aptly observed:

At the same time there was an interesting new phenomenon in Mecca—the appearance of a sense of unity based on common material interests. It was this rather than the fact that they all belonged to Quraysh that led the Ahlaf and the Mutayyabun to compose their quarrel. It was this again that led to the forgetting of rivalries and the formation of a 'coalition government' after the defeat at Badr. The significance of this is that it marks a weakening of the bond of kinship by blood and reveals the opportunity for establishing a wider unity on a new basis. If we are to look for an economic change correlated with the origin of Islam, then it is here that we must look . . .

In the rise of Mecca to wealth and power we have a movement from nomadic economy to a mercantile and capitalist economy.²⁰

Significant changes were thus taking place in the social and economic structure of the society which was emerging at the time. The breakup of the tribal system brought new problems in its wake. It gave rise to conflicts and tensions which, till Mohammed's rise to prophethood, were largely unresolved. In a pastoral or a nomadic society, tribal collectivism and its unwritten, yet rigidly observed, code of conduct prevent conflict between individuals, though inter-tribal confrontation generates prolonged spells of bellicosity and war. The tribal literature, therefore, abounds in proud description of the honour and glory of the tribe in trouncing its rival tribe. The pre-Islamic Arabic poetry also extols tribal glory and expresses the ethos of bravery, generosity, honour and genealogical superiority. Arabic poetry naturally lacked the drama of individual conflict in the Jahiliyyah period. But due to establishment of mercantile society, individualism was making its appearance. Mohammed had to tackle this 'malaise' of individualism in the backdrop of a tribal society on the decline. What has been very aptly described by Montgomery Watt as tribal humanism²¹ was the effective religion we find in the poets of Jahiliyyah. For the poets what gives life meaning is to belong to a tribe which can boast notable deeds of bravery and generosity, and to have some share in these at the same time contributing to the survival of the tribe. This is humanism in the sense that it is primarily in human values, in virtuous or manly conduct, *Muruah*, that life acquires significance. But it differs from most modern humanism in that it thinks of the tribe rather than the individuals as the locus of values. For Mohammed the most important religious problem was this breakdown of tribal humanism in face of the more individualistic organization of society.

Community Concept

Mohammed's genius saw the dawn of a new era based on relations which transcended tribal relations in an urban milieu like Mecca which, by then, had become an international centre of trade. He evolved a concept of *Ummah* that is, a community which transcended all tribal barriers. Tribal divisions in Mohammed's time had become more of a hindrance to progress. When he migrated to Tathrib (Medina, the city of the Prophet) he drew the outline of an agreement between various tribes, immigrants, helpers and Jews. This remarkable document, which bears testimony to Mohammed's political genius, has been preserved for posterity by Ibn Hisham in his biography of Mohammed, pages 341-344. This document for the first time introduced the concept of *Ummah* among the Arabs. It was a very tactful and cautious reform with significant implications. Mohammed did not openly strike against the independence of the tribes, but he destroyed its power structure in effect, by shifting the centre of power from the tribe to the community. Although, to begin with, the community included Jews, pagan Arabs as

well as Muslims, he fully understood what his opponents failed to see, that the Muslims were the most active, and soon to become the most predominant, partners in the newly-founded state.

Early Muslims and Enemies

It is interesting that early Islam was essentially a movement of young men as pointed out by an Egyptian writer, Abd al-Muta al as-Saidi.²² The great majority of those whose ages have been recorded were below forty at the time of migration (*hijra*). These persons were converted at least eight to ten years previously. Though Mohammed's exhortations to the rich against arrogance and hoarding appealed to the downtrodden, the slaves and orphans, his supporters were not all the down-and-outs with weak tribal affiliations. In fact many of them belonged to the leading tribes and the middle echelons who sensed the domination of the rich and powerful merchants. There were also a number of slaves of foreign origin who had been persecuted by their masters and who saw a chance of their liberation in the proclamations of Mohammed to set the slaves free, and the lowly-paid craftsmen who either had foreign origins or belonged to those tribes which did not benefit from the trade boom. In one *Surah*, the God declares, "Have you thought of him who denies the Last Judgement? It is he who turns away the orphan and does not urge others to feed the poor. Woe to those who pray but are heedless in their prayer; who make a show of piety and give no alms to the destitute."²³ In the Meccan period a number of such verses can be found exhorting the rich merchants to feed the poor. In another Meccan *Surah* called 'The Slanderer', Mohammed says:

Woe to all back-biting slanderers who amass riches and sedulously hoard them, thinking that their treasures will render them immortal! By no means! They shall be flung to the Destroying Flame. Would that you knew what the Destroying Flame is like! It is Allah's own kindled fire, which will rise up to the hearts of men. It will close upon them from every side, in towering columns.²⁴

Such verses reassured the harassed and the oppressed of some chance of bettering their plight and they threw their lot with Mohammed. When the dominant class of merchants in Mecca started persecuting Mohammed's followers some of them returned to the security of the tribes; but it was hard for those who did not belong to any of the tribes in Mecca and the slaves of foreign origin. When the persecution became intolerable, Mohammed had to order his followers to migrate to Abyssinia. Why Abyssinia? Could he be trying to attack Meccan trade as he did later from Medina? Or was he trying to develop an alternate trade route from the south to the Byzantine empire, out of reach of Meccan traders, to back their monopoly? One can only hazard a guess. Even if Mohammed had any such design, it did not work out.

Now let us examine the motives of Mohammed's opponents. Were his opponents enraged by his sacrilegious attacks on the pagan gods? This does not appear likely. Anything coming nearer to religion was what has

been described earlier as tribal humanism. Though tribal humanism had lost its appeal in urban centres like Mecca, where individualism was striking its roots in the soil of mercantilism, the pagan cults of Al-Lat, Al-'Uzza or Manah had not gripped the minds of Meccans either. These deities, as all available evidence points out, originally belonged to the agricultural communities of the north and were transplanted, in all probability, through trade contacts, to the urban centres of central Arabia where around 17 per cent of the population lived. These goddesses (daughters of Allah as the Arabs of Jahillyah believed) belonged to fertility cults. Herodotus mentions goddess Al-Lat under the name Alilat among the Nabataean deities. Manah, as an independent deity, her name associated with dhu-al-Shara, appears in the Nabataean inscriptions of al-Hijr. Thus it can be seen that the merchant capitalists of Mecca, having no roots in the fertility cults of agricultural civilization, had no great attachment to these deities whom they formally worshipped. Why then the opposition to Mohammed? In the opinion of H A R Gibb;

The resistance of the Meccans appears to have been due not so much to their conservatism or even to religious disbelief (though they ridiculed Mohammed's doctrine of resurrection) as to political and economic causes. They were afraid of the effects that his preaching might have on their economic prosperity, and especially that his pure monotheism might injure the economic assets of their sanctuaries. In addition they realized more quickly than Mohammed himself did that their acceptance of his teaching would introduce a new and formidable kind of political authority into their oligarchic community.²⁵

Sources of Resistance

Any mercantile community is generally averse to unrestrained authority. If the powerful merchants of Mecca had accepted Mohammed's claim of prophethood, prudence and wisdom, they would have had to concede what amounted to a position of absolute power to him. How could they refuse to abide by his injunctions once they accepted his august office of prophethood. The senate (mala) was the best possible organ where the merchants could have equitable distribution of power. It is interesting to note that there was no word for 'king' in current usage in Arabic language at that time. The word 'malik' was used only for foreign kings or despots like Byzantine, Sassanid or Ghasanid rulers.

There is another instance which shows how Arab merchants of Mecca were quite averse to being ruled by any single powerful individual. 'Uthman b. Huwayrith, a merchant, entertained some ambitions of his own to achieve pre-eminent position with the help of a foreign power, in this case Byzantine. He adopted Christianity and received some measure of support. This was perhaps part of the Byzantine reaction to the Persian conquest of the south. But soon the wealthy merchants of Mecca became suspicious. The overt act which, it appears, led to the wreck of 'Uthman's scheme was his denunciation, as aspiring to kingship, by a

member of his own clan of Asad, al-Aswad b. al-Muttalib. 'Uthman ultimately failed in his design. It is also important to note that the Arabs were quite conscious of their strong position as suppliers of goods which were very much in demand in Byzantine. Mohammed grew to maturity in such an atmosphere of high politics and had to be extremely cautious in his moves to trounce his enemies at their own game. His political acumen led him to victory where his lesser enemies failed. This was one of the important reasons why merchants of Mecca, who were normally indifferent to religion, became inveterate enemies of Mohammed.

Another City

The question arises as to why Mohammed received enthusiastic support in Medina (Yathrib) when he was faced with so much opposition in Mecca? Yathrib (Yathrippa of Ptolemy), lay some 300 miles north of Mecca and in a way was much more favoured by nature. This city lay on the spice road, which connected Yemen with Syria. It was a veritable oasis where date-palms were cultivated. Jewish inhabitants the banu-Nadir and banu-Qurayzah had converted it into a leading agricultural centre. Judging from the Aramaic vocabulary and the proper names, they appear to have been Judaized clans of Arabian and Aramaic stock.²⁶ though their descent may be traced to the Israelites who fled from Palestine at the time of its conquest by the Romans in the first century after Christ. The two leading non-Jewish tribes were the Aws and Khazraj, who, it appears, originally came from al-Yaman. Medina was a collection of settlements scattered over an oasis, or tract of fertile country, of perhaps some twenty square miles surrounded by hills, rocks, and stony ground—all uncultivable. The agricultural operations, however, did not yield much surplus. It was subsistence agriculture. Though Medina partly benefited from the trade caravans, it did not have a wealthy and powerful group of merchants as the town of Mecca had. So there was less individualism than in the mercantile atmosphere of Mecca. Whereas various tribes in Mecca entered into an alliance to guard their material interests (the Ahlaf and Muttayyabun composed their differences) in Medina the two principal tribes were fighting fierce battles against each other. Due to the absence of commerce on as large a scale as in Mecca, the tribal bonds were stronger and blood relationship valued much more than in Mecca. The concepts of valour, prowess and honour of one's tribe led to prolonged warfare which called for an arbiter who enjoyed unstinted support.

Mohammed thus found willing supporters in Medina who welcomed him as the saviour from the basic malaise of their society. Mohammed had a unique opportunity to translate his ideas into practice. He displayed his political genius by drawing up an agreement among the various tribes, Jews, Muslims and pagans. This agreement, while ending inter-tribal warfare, enabled Mohammed to assume a position of supreme importance, something he was denied by the wealthy oligarchs of Mecca. In Medina there was no such group to challenge the supremacy of

Mohammed. By the new agreement which he drew up, a community came into existence which transcended all the conventional blood or tribal barriers. This was the need of the hour as the tribal relations of production and existence were becoming an intolerable strain on further progress. The nomadic or pastoral life was being transformed into an organized urban life.

It should, however, be borne in mind that in these urban areas there was no institution of landed property. Even in Medina which was an oasis, agriculture had not developed to such an extent as to give rise to individual ownership. The cultivable lands were collectively owned. Some Meccan magnates did own land in the neighbouring oasis of Taif where they constructed villas for vacationing in summer. The Banu Tha'qif tribe lived in Taif. Their distinctive feature was that they lived on cereals whereas other Arabs were content with dates and milk. In view of the absence of any landed property or individual ownership of land for agricultural purposes, it would be wrong to see early Islam in a feudal setting as has often been done. Equally wrong is to see a replica of socialism in Islam as some Muslim intellectuals have done for reasons of political expediency or lack of proper understanding of the origin and development of Islam. This is not to deny the fact that Islam did play a progressive role inasmuch as it dissolved the relations based on pastoral and nomadic life and led to a higher form, urban and mercantile.

Contrast with Christianity

It would be equally interesting to examine the international situation and political high drama at the time which bore its unmistakable marks on the emergent movement of Islam. Before we examine this, it would be relevant to have a word about Christianity which was the official religion of the Byzantine empire, one of the most important powers Islam had to reckon with. Christianity, which subsequently became the religion of the Roman empire was, to begin with, a religion of those who were brutally oppressed and mercilessly exploited by the tyrannical rule of the Roman emperors. As Engels points out, "Religions are founded by people who feel a need for religion themselves and have a feeling for the religious needs of the masses."²⁷ This applies very aptly to the genesis of Christianity. Of all the people in the Roman provinces, the lot of poor freemen and slaves who themselves were once freemen or sons of freemen was the worst. The situation for them was hopeless. They saw no possibility of rescuing themselves from the iron clutches of the Roman tyrants. For them the flight from disheartening external world into internal world was inevitable. Among them the hatred of their condition of life was very strong.

Thus it was in the midst of this general economic, political, intellectual and moral degeneration that Christianity appeared on the scene. It provided solace to the discordant and dispirited humanity in the subjugated Roman province. Christianity did not spark off revolt against the

unbearable external conditions. In times to come, it evolved its dogmas based on oriental religious ideas, Greek rationalism and the Stoic doctrines. In this form it became palatable to Rome itself against whom it was originally intended to protest. The emperor Constantine saw in the adoption of this religion the best means of exalting himself to the position of autocrat of the Roman world. A religious challenge was thus conveniently blunted by the Roman emperor by incorporating it. It totally failed as a challenge to the Hellenic domination of the east. Islam on the contrary, was the religion of the dominant and powerful mercantile bourgeoisie of Mecca. The Meccan merchants had their own ambitions and wanted to steer clear of both the major powers, the Byzantine and the Sassanid empires. Their main objective was to carry on their trade while maintaining their independence. They largely succeeded in preserving their independent position, aided, no doubt, by the impenetrable desert which foreign powers dreaded. Moreover, the Byzantium greatly depended for luxury items on the Meccan merchants.

The objects of trade from East to West were Indian and Chinese goods, the products of Iraq and Iran, and those of Yaman and Hadramaut. The first included live animals and birds (as curiosities), furs and hides, Kashmir wool, musk, ivory (most came from Abyssinia), pearls, mother of pearl, precious and semi-precious stones, lac (red dye), and most important of all, silk. Among vegetable products were pepper (very important), ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, spikenard, nutmegs, indigo, a little cotton, and precious woods (ebony, rosewood, sandalwood). All these were high-priced luxury articles, which would carry heavy transport charges and tariffs.²⁸

The traders of Mecca were quite conscious of their important role, and, there was an undercurrent of an ideology which, to satisfy the aspirations of these merchants, could create an effective system of security to carry on their trade peacefully.

Bulwark against Hellenism

Thus, unlike Christianity, their ideology could not have been one emerging from the suppressed people seeking solace from the unbearable conditions of life. Quite naturally, therefore, whereas Christianity as a reaction against Hellenism failed, Islam proved successful. Toynbee aptly remarks:

Again, the intrusion of Hellenism upon the Syriac world in the train of Alexander the Great presented a standing challenge to the Syriac Society. Was it, or was it not, to rise up against the intrusible civilization and cast it out? Confronted with this challenge, the Syriac Society made a number of attempts to respond, and these attempts all had one common feature. In every instance the anti-Hellenic reaction took a religious movement for its vehicle. Nevertheless there was a fundamental difference between the first four of these reactions and the last one. The Zoroastrian, the Jewish, the Nestorian and the

Monophysite reactions were failures; the Islamic reaction was a success.²⁹

He further says:

The Emperor Heraclius was condemned not to taste of death until he had seen 'Umar the Successor of Mohammed the Prophet coming into his kingdom to undo, utterly and for ever, the work of all the Hellenizers of Syriac domains from Alexander onwards. For Islam succeeded whereas its predecessors had failed. It completed the eviction of Hellenism from the Syrian world. It reintegrated, in the Arab Caliphate, the Syriac Universal state which Alexander had ruthlessly cut short, before its mission had been fulfilled, when he overthrew the Persian Achaemenidae. Finally, Islam endowed the Syriac Society, at last, with an indigenous universal church and thereby enabled it, after centuries of suspended animation, to give up the ghost in the assurance that it would not now pass away without leaving offspring; for the Islamic Church became the chrysalis out of which the new Arabic and Iranic civilizations were in due course to emerge.³⁰

Though Toynbee, a bourgeois historian, makes this statement with a penetrating insight, he does not give any indication about the reasons which brought about this revolution in the Eastern Hellenic society. Christianity—though a religious protest movement of the underdogs of Roman Eastern province—was, in times to come, itself hellenized with the admixture of Greek rationalism, doctrines of Stoic philosophy and native eastern nomadic or pastoral cults. In this form, it was embraced, in order to pacify the brewing discontent among the vast multitudes of slaves to whom this religion tremendously appealed, by the Roman emperor Constantine himself. Christianity now onwards came to be identified with the oppressive rulers themselves and lost whatever anti-exploitative sting it had. It could only talk of the 'Kingdom of Heaven' to dawn in a remote future. Here and now were only sufferings for the faithful in order to redeem themselves from the sinful life.

Unifying Force

Islam, on the contrary was the ideology of a powerful and ambitious mercantile bourgeoisie for whom the fruits of their endeavour should be realized here and now, within the framework of historical praxis. Moreover, Islam, cutting across narrow tribal bonds, provided a rallying point to all the Arabs—nomads as well as townsmen. Thus Joel Carmichael perceptively remarks in *The Shaping of the Arabs*:

it was not Islam that brought about the folk migration of the Arab tribes, but the folk migration, originating for quite independent reasons that united them under Islam. The expansion of the Muslim Arabs was the culmination of a long drawn-out development. What Islam changed was simply the slogan under which the general fighting was conducted, or rather, it gave this general movement a simple slogan capable of drawing all Arabs together in opposition to the

great empires, which thus, after mistrusting the small buffer states of the Ghassanids and the Lakhmides, finally found themselves face to face with a far more numerous confederation of Arabian tribes temporarily unified by the simple tenets of primitive Islam.³¹

It is important to note, in this connection, the role played by the two buffer states of Ghassan and Lakhm in defending the interests of the two empires along whose respective borders they came into existence. About the middle of the third century Arabia was enclosed on the north and north-east by the rival empires of Rome and Persia, to which the Syrian desert stretching right across the peninsula formed a natural termination. In order to protect themselves from Bedouin raiders who poured over the frontier provinces and, after laying hands on all the booty within reach, vanished as suddenly as they came, both powers found it necessary to plant a line of garrisons along the edge of the wilderness. In this way the tribals were held in check, but as force alone seemed an expensive and inefficient remedy it was decided, in accordance with the well-proved maxim 'divide and rule' to enlist a number of the offending tribes in the imperial service. Regular pay and the prospect of the immediate plunder (in those days Rome and Persia were almost perpetually at war) were inducements that no true Bedouin could resist. The inhospitable desert of Arabia hardly provided any other worthwhile means of sustenance (except to plunder the rich trade caravans or townspeople). This plunder, on account of its sheer economic necessity, became institutionalized and known as *Ghazwa* (raid).

Politics of Imperial Religion

Even Mohammed made use of this to bring his recalcitrant enemies to their knees. His raid on a Meccan caravan returning from the Yemen, took place in January 624 and has been much maligned by the opponents of Mohammed. Some of the Western writers have gone to the extent of calling him a mere brigand pretending to be a prophet. They in fact try to understand Mohammed in contrast to the mystified character of Christ who surrendered himself to the Roman tyrants and sacrificed his life on the cross. Mohammed, it must be clearly understood, was a prophet as well as statesman trying to build a state power out of the tribal wilderness in Arabia. He used the strategy of attacking a trade caravan (which was, by no means, unusual in those days as explained above) to strike a blow to the Meccan merchants and provide much needed sustenance from the booty so gained to the Meccan emigrants as well as consolidate his position in the Medinan society. All these objectives were splendidly achieved by this raid and Mohammed, as a master strategist, made his presence felt. This was the beginning of the founding of an Islamic state which culminated in elevating Mohammed to the exalted position of an unchallenged ruler, something unheard of in Arabia of his days.

Both the great powers of the day tried to woo some nomadic

Bedouin tribes to protect the boundaries of their respective empires from the most dreaded raid of the Bedouins. To penetrate right into the heart of the desert to subjugate the Arabs was beyond their wildest dreams. The method both the empires employed was to support a prince on the borders between desert and town and see that he was strong enough to prevent the nomads from raiding the settled lands. The dynasty of Ghassan, bordering over Byzantine empire and receiving support from it, adopted Christianity. But, and it is important to note, they did not adopt orthodox Christianity which was the religion of the Byzantine rulers. They rather preferred a native variety called Monophysitism. Orthodox Christianity maintained an ambivalent attitude towards Monophysitism at times compromising and at times persecuting them as heretics. The persecution was scaled up if the loyalty of the prince became suspect. Thus religion was inextricably involved with politics and the significance of this was not lost on the shrewd Arabs of Mecca who wanted to maintain their distance from the overlordship of the Byzantine rulers. Lakhmidian kings were downright enemies of the Byzantine and they, therefore, preferred a form of Christianity which was totally unpalatable to the Orthodox, that is, Nestorian or East Syrian Christianity. To assert political supremacy, the Byzantine overlords on the one hand, and the Sassanids on the other, persecuted ruling Arabs of the buffer states and thus created their own enemies. Thus writes Alfred Guillaume:

From the sixth century onwards the history of the Arab west is one long series of persecutions in the name of orthodoxy, culminating in the alienation of the Arabs and the downfall of the Greek empire in Syria. As monophysites the Arabs steadily refused to accept the doctrines of two natures in Christ. The persecutions which these unhappy people suffered were sometimes worse than their treatment by the Muslims in subsequent years.⁸²

Incongruities of Christianity

When in 563 the famous Arab chief went to see the emperor of Byzantine, he carried a declaration of his faith in a written letter. The one sentence therein is characteristic of the Arab defiance and hints at the beginning of Islam. That sentence reads: "The Trinity is one Divinity, one nature, one essence; those who will not accept this doctrine are to be anathematized!" When two bishops refused to sign the declaration of faith he brought, Harith replied with the ominous words: "Now I know that you are heretics. We and our armies accept this doctrine, as do the orientals." Comments Alfred Guillaume, "Here plainly is a claim to a native Arab Christianity stripped of the subtle refinements of the Greek theologians, and an explicit claim to the right to defend that faith by the sword."⁸³ Thus we see that Christianity was either not acceptable to the Arabs or they accepted it in a form different from that of the Byzantine Orthodox Church. This was the direct result of political collision and Arab pride although they were subservient to the Byzantine rulers.

Moreover, Christianity, even in its native Monophysite or Nestorian form, could not make much headway except in those areas which were in the sphere of influence of two great empires. Christianity with its elaborate rituals originated in a slave-holding agricultural society and, therefore, had nothing appealing to the Arab ethos. The Arabs were either nomadic people or townsmen. The nomadic people were naturally in pastoral stage, and in inhospitable desert, largely dependent on raids for their survival. The townsmen too, by and large, were unacquainted with agriculture, and depended on international commerce for their livelihood. In view of this, any religion originating in agricultural milieu would not hold any attraction for them. Neither would it fulfill any economic function. Propitiation of deities, human sacrifice and ecstatic rituals would not capture the desert imagination; it would neither appeal to townsmen engaged in business or a variety of crafts. What would appeal to such townsmen is to emphasize notions of duty to be performed with strict regularity (as they are accustomed to this kind of psychology in their business and craft operations and that also fulfills economic necessity) ideas of recompense and simple doctrines. The freedom-loving nomads would not like this pattern of life which ideally suited the commercially-oriented townsmen. Mohammed had, therefore, great difficulty in making these tribal nomads conform to his religious doctrines and force them to follow any regular pattern of life.

Economics of New Religion

But Islam fulfilled one vital economic necessity for them; they were united by its few simple doctrines and this unity paid them rich dividends in the form of outward expansion and rich booty in the wake of foreign conquest of wealthy empires. They paid lip service to the rigid doctrinaire and disciplinary life required of them by Islam. Their material instincts always revolted against discipline and although they became Muslims *en masse*, the majority of them neither believed in Islam nor knew what it meant. Often their motives were frankly utilitarian. The conquering Arabs, as the popular myth has it, never presented the alternatives of Islam or death. They were more interested in levying capitation tax *jazya* which gave them economic relief. However, the capitation tax was far less oppressive than what was exacted by former imperial masters and as such the Arabs were welcomed by the native people groaning under the heavy burden imposed on them by the Byzantine and the Sassanid rulers. There was no feudal system among the conquering Arabs and after the first flush of victory, they imposed a light tax burden in the form of *jazya*. The peasants were, by and large, left undisturbed on their lands.

A statement attributed to the people of Hims is representative of the sentiment cherished by the native Syrians towards the new conquerors: "We like rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny under which we have been living".³⁴ Again, according to Phillip K. Hitti,

This 'easy conquest' of the land had its own special causes. The Hellenistic culture imposed on the land since its conquest by Alexander (332 B C) was only skin-deep and limited to the urban population. The rural people remained conscious of the cultural and racial differences between themselves and their masters. This racial antipathy between the Semitic population of Syria and the Greek rulers was augmented by sectarian differences . . . But the bulk of the population of Syria remained Monophysite. Behind their development and maintenance of a separate Syrian church there undoubtedly lay a submerged, semi-articulate feeling of nationality.³⁵

Thus it will be seen that the spread of Islam was brought about, not by the popular notion of death or Islam, but by a variety of factors among which the economic one was predominant.

Not by Faith Alone

In course of time the Arabs in the conquered territories formed an exclusive military class, living in great camps and supported by revenues derived from the non-Mohammedan population. Out of such camps arose two cities destined to make their mark in history—Basra on the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates, and Kufa, which was founded about the same time on the western branch of the latter stream, not far from Hira. It is interesting to note in this connection that the revenues on which the military camps depended were far more important than the commitment to faith. Rueben Levy says in *Social Structure of Islam*:

A similar conflict between the claims of faith and those of Royal treasury took place in 728, under the Caliph Hisham, when the Governor of Khurasan, Ashrab ibn Abdallah, planned to convert all the inhabitants of Transoxiana to Islam by offering freedom from taxation as an inducement. The Muslim missionaries who were sent out were so successful that protests were raised not only by the revenue officials, whose perquisites depended on the sums they collected but also by the local chieftains (the dihqans) who had reason to fear considerable harm to their own prestige if the democratic faith of Islam took too firm a hold on the peasantry. The arguments of the treasury officers were at last able to convince the governor that since the Arab garrisons in Persia depended on the revenues collected locally, they would soon be reduced to starvation if all taxes were remitted. He accordingly reimposed the Kharaj or land tax on everyone who had formerly been liable to it and whether they had submitted to the test of circumcision or not. The result of this change of policy was wholesale rebellion, which for some years lost to the Arab the whole of Transoxiana except small regions about Dabusia and Samarqand. Some of the lost territory was regained for Islam—though not for the Umayyad caliph Hisham then reigning at Damascus when in 734 the supporters of the claims of the prophet's family, the Alids rose in revolt against Hisham and gathered adherents by promising to observe

the contract made with the adherents of the protected religions (here mainly Zoroastrians), not to levy tribute on the Muslims and not to oppress anyone.⁸⁶

Thus the claim of treasury and political support had the better of the faith. Even the Prophet had to please the hypocrites in the Medinan period by offering them material incentives (*ta'lif al Qulub*).

Affluence, Not Asceticism

It is thus clear that Islam fulfilled a vital economic function for the conquered as well as the conquerors; for the conquerors by creating what was lacking in the economic community of Mecca—a state machinery and philosophy of state—and for the conquered by liberating them from the oppressive clutches of Byzantine and Sassanid empires. But this phase was not to last very long. The conquest and possession of the vast fortunes had its own dialectics, which, very soon stripped Islam of its progressive character. The material wealth and its distribution soon created dissensions which tore the Muslim society asunder within two decades of the death of Mohammed. Ibn-Khaldun quotes Al-Masudi who says:

In the days of 'Uthman, the men around Mohammed acquired estates and money. On the day 'Uthman was killed, 150,000 dinars and 1,000,000 dirhams were in the hands of his treasurer. The value of his estates in Wadi-al-Qura and Hunayn and other places was 200,000 dinars. He also left many camels and horses. The eighth part of the estate of as-Zubayr after his death amounted to 50,000 dinars. He also left 1,000 horses and 1,000 female servants. Talhah's income from Iraq was 1,000 dinars a day, and his income from the region of ash-Sharah was more than that. The stable of 'Abd-ar-Rahman b. 'Awf contained 1,000 horses. He also had 1,000 camels and 1,000 sheep. One fourth of his estate after his death amounted to 84,000. Zayd b. Thabit left silver and gold that was broken into pieces with pickaxes, in addition to the (other) property and estates that he left in the value of 10,000 dinars. Az-Zubayr built himself a residence in al-Basrah and other residences in Egypt and al-Kufah and Alexandria. Talhah built one in Al-Kufah and had his residence in Medina improved. He used plaster, bricks, and teakwood. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas built himself a residence in al-'Aqiq', (a suburb of Medina). He made it high and spacious, and had balustrades put on top of it. Al-Meqdad built his residence in Medina and had it plastered inside and out. Ta'la b. Munayah left 50,000 dinars and estate and other things the value of which amounted to 300,000 dirhams. (Ending the quotation from Al-Masudi, Ibn-Khaldun gives his terse comment:) Such were the gains people made. Their religion did not blame them (for amassing so much) because, as booty, it was lawful property.⁸⁷

Thus for a religion originating in a commercial town, property has to be legal. It cannot be otherwise. Nor would this religion encourage asceticism like Christianity. Free nomadic people and those living in

commercial towns would not be attracted to any ascetic form of religion. Therefore Islam would have none of it. It would permit the amassing of fortune provided poll tax (which was fixed at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent) was paid.

Roots of Dissension

The enormous fortunes amassed by individuals, as the quotation from Al-Masudi shows, was in sharp contrast to the stark poverty of the immigrants during Mohammed's days. He himself lived a very hard life and starved on many occasions. He lived in a simple house which had few rooms and an open courtyard. He held his assemblies in the mosque which was built with mud bricks and branches of palm tree. This is how Maxim Rodinson describes the Prophet's mosque:

It was a rectangular courtyard, enclosed by a wall of sun-dried bricks set on a few courses of stone. On the northern side was a row of palm trunks, set up parallel to the wall, where two cabins were built, one for each of the Prophet's two wives. (He married the little girl Aisha while the building was in progress). Carpets were laid where these cabins opened into the courtyard. The Prophet had no place of his but lodged with each of his wives in turn. Most of his time was spent, after the Arab fashion of the time, in this courtyard; it was here that he received ambassadors, conducted business and addressed his followers. There prisoners were confined, the sick cared for and even, on occasion, mock battles fought. There, too, communal prayers were said. The poorer companions slept there. It was, in short, both the Master's seat and a general meeting place for the whole community.⁸⁸

Contrast this, again, with the place which Mu'aviya built for himself within few decades of Mohammed's death. In the heart of Damascus, set like a pearl in the emerald girdle of its gardens, stood the glittering palace of the Umayyads, commanding a view of flourishing plain which extended south-westwards to Mount Hermon with its turban of perpetual snow. Al-Khadra (the green one) was its name. Its builder was none other than Mu'aviya, founder of the dynasty, and it stood beside the Umayyad Mosque which al-Walid had newly adorned and made into that jewel of architecture which still attracts lovers of beauty. In the audience chamber a square seat covered with richly embroidered cushions formed the caliphal throne, on which during formal audience the caliph, in gorgeous flowing robes, sat cross-legged.⁸⁹

The accumulation of vast fortunes by the companions of Mohammed as described by Ibn-Khaldun above and later construction of gorgeous and elegant buildings in sharp contrast to Mohammed's mosque and residence, were due to availability of large surplus later made possible by the conquests of foreign lands rich in resources. In the Prophet's time some surplus, which became available, was from the surrendered cultivated lands of the small Medinan Jewish community and was too scanty to provide for comforts. The appropriation of vast amount of wealth as described

above plunged the nascent Muslim community into civil war which began after 'Uthman (the third Caliph) assumed the reigns of power. He was accused by the rebels to have appointed relatives and members of his clan to all important governmental posts.

State and Rebellion

Mohammed had created a very primitive kind of state machinery. There were, in his lifetime, hardly any state functionaries paid from the state treasury. In other words, not the bureaucracy, but only the highly committed followers of Islam were in charge of the new-born state, their livelihood being their own responsibility. There was no standing army either. The committed followers of Mohammed banded themselves together to fight whenever the occasion demanded. But now it was a different matter. A new bureaucracy supported by the state treasury came into existence. There were few important posts to go round and a large number of senior companions to claim them. Moreover, some companions got rich dividends and acquired large estates.

All these created dissensions and led to civil war causing much bloodshed. The two last Caliphs were murdered by the Muslims themselves. The protest movement adopted two opposite channels: the Shiite movement (Shias were supporters of Ali) and the Kharijite movement (Kharijites were enemies of 'Uthman and Ali). The Shia protest movement had its origin in towns and found its supporters among poor craftsmen, people of foreign origin and slaves. Kufa, the centre of Shia movement had half its population composed of *Mawali* (clients), who monopolized handicraft, trade and commerce. They were mostly Persians in race and language; they had come to Kufa as prisoners of war and converted to Islam. However, they remained dependents of Arabs and had no hope of freeing themselves from the status of clientship. The Kharijites on the other hand represented the nomadic reaction against the aristocracy of the rich town dwellers. The Kharijites were mostly drawn from the Bedouin soldiery who settled in Basra and Kufa after the Persian wars. Far from acknowledging the peculiar sanctity of a Qurayshite, they desired a chief of their own blood whom they might obey, in Bedouin fashion, as he did not abuse or exceed the powers conferred upon him. Their two fundamental doctrines were 1) every free Arab was eligible as Caliph and 2) that an evil-doing Caliph should be deposed. Their nomadic outlook could not accept strict discipline of urban life and government. Their slogan was *la imara* (no government) which meant the anarchy of desert life. Future recruits for religio-political opposition either came from Kharijites or Shias, and some of the bitterest class wars were fought under the banner of the Shia movement.

¹ Maxim Rodinson, *Mohammed*, p 236-37.

² Philip K Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p 14.

³ Joel Carmichael, *The Shaping of the Arabs: A Study in Ethnic Identity*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd p10.

- ⁴ Alfred Guillaume, *Islam*, p 3.
- ⁵ Phillip K Hitti, *op.cit.*, p 64.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ R A Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p 63.
- ⁸ *Marx and Engels on Religion*, Schocken Books, New York, p 124-25.
- ⁹ Joel Carmichael, *op.cit.*, p 21.
- ¹⁰ Engels to Marx in *Marx and Engels on Religion*, p 119-120.
- ¹¹ H A R Gibb, *Mohammed*, p 17.
- ¹² *The Muqaddimah, Ibn-Khaldun*, English translation by Franz Rosenthal, edited and abridged by N J Dawood, p 118-19.
- ¹³ *Herodotus*, Book III, ch 8.
- ¹⁴ *Hamasa*, p 122.
- ¹⁵ R A Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p 83.
- ¹⁶ W Montgomery Watt, *Mohammed at Mecca*, Oxford University Press, p 3.
- ¹⁷ H A R Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p 17.
- ¹⁸ *The Koran*, translated by N J Dawood, The Imrans, p 412.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 406.
- ²⁰ W Montgomery Watt, *op. cit.*, p 19.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p 19.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p 24.
- ²³ *Shabab al-Quraysh*, Cairo 1947.
- ²⁴ *The Koran*, Alms, p 18.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p 28.
- ²⁶ H A R Gibb, *op. cit.*, p 18.
- ²⁷ *Taqubi*, (Vol II p 49) designates the Arabian tribes from which they descended.
- ²⁸ "Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity," *Marx and Engels on Religion*, p 197.
- ²⁹ D S Richards (Ed.) *Islam and Trade of Asia*, Faber and Faber, London 1970, p 4.
- ³⁰ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol I p 174; Abridgment of Volumes I-VI by D C Somervell.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p 175.
- ³² Joel Carmichael, *op. cit.*, p 64-65.
- ³³ Alfred Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p 16.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p 17.
- ³⁵ Baladhuri, p 137 1, 13 Hitti, p 211.
- ³⁶ Philip K Hitti, *op. cit.*, p 153.
- ³⁷ Reuben Levy, *Social Structure of Islam*, p 23-24.
- ³⁸ *The Muqaddimah, Ibn-Khaldun, op.cit.*, p 163.
- ³⁹ Maxim Rodinson, *op.cit.*, p 150.
- ⁴⁰ Philip K Hitti, *op.cit.*, p 215.

Report

Student Leadership in Lucknow

RASHID ALI SYED

IT is generally said that the growing student unrest in the country is the handiwork of a few "professional" student leaders, who are at times branded as malcontents, rowdies, or anti-social elements. The assumptions of this conspiracy theory of "student trouble" are: (1) the vast majority of students are interested in their studies and in a "peaceful" atmosphere on the campus, and (2) the "student trouble" can (therefore) be met and contained by setting the student leaders right, so to say.

This report deals with some characteristics of the student leadership, but without accepting the aforesaid view of student unrest—an unrest which is, in fact, rooted in the maladies of the wider economic-political order. This report presents the results of a survey of 220 student leaders¹ of Lucknow University, a centre of recent student protest in India.

Age Groups

There are two important aspects of the relationship between age and leadership, namely the age at which leadership first appears and the age-differential between the leaders and the followers. But we shall only note here two things: the evidence on both these aspects is contradictory; secondly, the factor of age is given special significance in the context of student leadership and student protest. As most students are young persons, the student leadership all over the world is, in the very nature of things, in the hands of youth; and student protest is youth protest. This partly explains the special character of student protest, which is marked by spontaneity, direct action and idealism.² But surely age is not the only factor which makes the student protesters disregard the more peaceful channels of protest. Deepening social malaise on the one hand, and vested interests and rigidity or woodenness of established authority on the other, are also to be taken into account in this connection.

The majority of student leaders, 53.7 per cent, the study revealed, were in the age group of 20-24 years. The average age was 23.5 years; and as the average age of the general student in U P is 20.1³, the leaders

TABLE I
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT LEADERS

Year	Number	Percentage
18 — 20	22	10.5
20 — 22	63	28.6
22 — 24	56	25.1
24 — 26	44	20.0
26 — 28	20	9.0
28 — 30	6	2.7
30 and above	9	4.1
Total	220	100.0

turned out to be older than the non-leaders, a fact which contrasts, for example, with Artonio Rivera-Arroyo's finding that at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, student leaders were younger than non-leaders.⁴ It is also interesting to note that 15 leaders were above 28 years of age, though this is a feature which is by no means confined to Lucknow.

Religion and Caste

The religious composition of student leadership roughly conformed to the general population and leadership picture of the country; the overwhelming majority of the leaders, 85.5 per cent, were Hindus, and 10 per cent were Muslims. Significantly, four per cent leaders simply refused to give their religion, perhaps because of their strong Marxist leanings.

Also noteworthy is the fact that there was not a single leader belonging to the Christian faith. The reasons for this are, however, not far to seek. Firstly, the very number of Christian students is so small that it carries no weight in students' electoral politics tinged with communal and caste considerations. (This is also true of Muslim students, but to a much smaller extent). Secondly, Christian students are poorly integrated with the wider student community, perhaps because of their snobbery or elitist mentality born of their English-medium public schooling. And thirdly, as the Christian students are less politicized than their non-Christian counterparts, they are more interested in extra-curricular activities (chiefly of a cultural character) and in career than in student politics.

TABLE II
RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF STUDENT LEADERS

Religion	Number	Percentage
Hindu	188	85.5
Muslim	23	10.4
Sikh	2	0.9
Declined to state	7	3.2
Total	220	100.0

In the Indian context, even more important is the factor of caste. For, in spite of much social change and "modernization" there is hardly any organization—economic, political, administrative and educational—in which caste considerations do not play some and at times a major role. Many observers and analysts of the university scene in general and the student community in particular have highlighted the impact of caste on university affairs and on student politics in India⁵.

TABLE III

CASTE COMPOSITION OF STUDENT LEADERS

Caste	Number	Percentage
Brahmin	75 (42.6%)	
Kayasth	20 (11.4%)	
Kshatriya	47 (26.7%)	
Vaish	34 (19.3%)	
	<hr/> 176 (100.0%)	93.6
Scheduled		
and Backward	12	6.4
	<hr/> 188	<hr/> 100.0

The caste composition of the student leadership also conforms to the country's wider political leadership picture: the student leadership, to be precise, was monopolized by the upper caste Hindus (93.6 per cent), chiefly the Brahmins (42.6 per cent). There are two reasons for this, namely, the student-power structure, like the wider power structure, still continues to be highly elitist, and, secondly, upper caste students are economically and numerically dominant.

The scheduled caste student leaders did resent this fact. They also angrily mentioned the continued harassment of scheduled castes, especially Harijans, by upper caste Hindus. This harassment, it must be pointed out, is largely a rural problem but it is by no means confined to any particular region or state. Harijans, landless workers and their kith and kin in particular, have been subjected to indescribable atrocities in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Recently in a village in South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu, a road was constructed for the exclusive use of Harijans to save the caste Hindus from pollution!

It must however be stressed that what is most frequently described and analysed as caste conflict is in reality class conflict in that the upper castes are also the owning classes and the lower or scheduled castes like Harijans belong to the have-not, non-owning and exploited classes which include the landless labourers in the countryside.

Rural-Urban Background

The socio-economic composition of universities and colleges in India has notably changed over the last 20 years. This change has been brought about by the influx of first generation students from rural areas on the one hand and urban lower-middle class on the other: from a small percentage among the student population in universities and colleges, the rural element had shot up to about 36 per cent as early as 1961.⁸ A number of factors have been responsible for this influx of students with rural background, but the most significant of these is the increasing realization of the sheer necessity of higher education for entering modern professions and occupations; besides, in a country of mass illiteracy, a university degree has great prestige value. Needless to say, this change in the social-economic composition of our university and college student population is perceptibly and deeply altering the age-old character and ethos of the institutions of higher learning.

However, though urban students outnumber the rural ones, student leadership was monopolized by the latter—about 68 per cent leaders belonged to the rural areas, with most of them maintaining regular contacts with their native villages.

TABLE IV
STUDENT LEADERS' ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Ecology	Number	Percentage
a) Contact with village regular	110 (74.3%)	
b) Contact with village irregular	38 (25.7%)	
Total	148 (100.0%)	67.3
Urban	72	32.7
TOTAL	220	100.0

Some analysts attribute the growing "coarseness", "vulgarity" and "insolence" of student protest in India to the rise of the rural element among the student population in the universities and colleges. The rural student, they point out, is inherently "rustic", uncivilized, and, secondly, his migration from the village to the city gives him the feel of unbounded freedom. This may not be entirely incorrect, but it must be noted that the behaviour of student agitators in such highly urbanized countries as America is in no way less "rough" than that of Indian student activists. As such, the roughness of student behaviour cannot be explained entirely in terms of their rural background. The fact of the matter is that the sharpness of protest is determined by the depth of frustration and city life is itself provocative of much tension and violence in all bourgeois societies, including India. Further, a rural student's existential situation in the city is that of a "marginal man", and marginality is a most potent source of non-conformity. Finally, commenting on the activism of stu-

dents having a rural background, Robert O Myhr rightly observes: "Students from the interior can hope to make a name for themselves in urban university politics and thereby to enjoy greater esteem when they return home."⁷

Where They Stay

The Lucknow University is a residential one, but most students do not live on the campus due to the small number of the hostels. In contrast, however, the majority of student leaders were hostellers—60.9 per cent, to be exact—as they did not belong to Lucknow proper.

TABLE V

KIND OF RESIDENCE OF THE STUDENT LEADERS

Residence	Number	Percentage
Hostellers	134	60.9
Day Scholars		
a) Living with family	65 (75.6%)	
b) Living with relatives	5 (5.8%)	
c) Living with friends	3 (3.5%)	
d) Living in private lodges	13 (15.1%)	
Total	86 (100%)	39.1
TOTAL	220	100.0

Leaders in residence have made hostels the nerve centre of student agitation. Besides, in view of the prevailing feeling against police entry on the campus, hostels provide the safest operational headquarters and sanctuaries to student activists; also, being freer than the day scholars living with their families, the hostellers take a far more active part in student strikes and agitations than the non-hostellers. This is why the university authorities invariably get the hostels vacated at the earliest during a full-scale student agitation; and the police too make a special target of hostels, occupying them immediately on entering the campus. In fact, police action against hostel inmates is at times so bloody and brutal that the hostel wardens and the general body of teachers also publicly protest against it. Moreover, at times some teachers even rush to the scene of police crackdown to protect the hostel inmates, but in vain—the police beat them up too, and this creates a doubly difficult and embarrassing situation for the university authorities.

Marital Status

Most students in India are unmarried, especially because the age of marriage has steadily gone up in recent times. It was, therefore no surprise that most of the students leaders—above three-fourths—were bachelors. Evidently, single student leaders can devote more time to agitation and politics than their married counterparts.

There were 50 married student leaders. Of these 88 per cent were married between 15 and 25 years of age, and a little more than half had

TABLE VI
STUDENT LEADERS' MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	Number	Percentage
Unmarried	170	77.3
Married	50	22.7
Total	220	100.0
I Age at marriage		
Below 15 years	3	6.0
15 - 20 years	23	46.0
20 - 25 years	21	42.0
25 and above	3	6.0
II Children		
Yes	23	46.0
No	27	54.0
III Kind of Marriage		
i) Arranged	46	92.0
Personal choice	4	8.0
ii) Endogamous	48	96.0
Exogamous	2	4.0

TABLE VII
STUDENT LEADERS' MARRIAGE PREFERENCES

	Number	Percentage
1 Marriage preferences of unmarried student leaders		
a) Inside own community	120	81.1
b) Outside own community	9	6.1
c) No response	19	12.8
Total	148	
2		
a) Inside caste	113	76.4
b) Outside caste	16	10.8
c) No response	19	12.8
Total	148	
3		
a) Arranged	75	50.7
b) Personal choice	73	49.3
Total	148	
4 Marriage		
a) Sacrament	159	72.3
b) Contract	61	27.7
Total	220	
5 Divorce		
a) Favour	71	32.3
b) Disfavour	149	67.7
Total	220	

no children. But in view of the professed radicalism of student leaders, two things are interesting to note: (i) almost all (92 per cent) of these leaders had an arranged marriage; and (ii) but for two leaders, all had married in their own caste.

Most of the 148 unmarried student leaders who *intended* to marry said that they would marry within their own community (81.1 per cent) and caste (76.4 per cent) and about an equal number favoured arranged (50.7 per cent) and personal choice marriage (49.3 per cent). Also, most (72.3 per cent) of the 220 leaders treated marriage as a sacrament and were therefore opposed to divorce (67.7 per cent), though one third did favour it.

It is thus clear that most of the student leaders were tradition-bound in matters of marriage. But in matters of food habits, teacher-taught relationship and attitude towards authority, they had deviated from 'traditional' norms. This suggests that in India the so called conflict of generations has progressed, but slowly in certain areas of life and fast in others.

Professional Leaders

Some observers of student protest have especially stressed the role of what are called "professional" student leaders. As Lipset observes: "The greater the number of years the student spends at the university, the greater the likelihood of student political activity"⁸. This is true of many Latin American and Asian countries. Francis Donahue cites the case of Efren Capiz Villegas, who led a student agitation at the University of Morelia in Mexico and had been a student for seventeen of his forty-five years⁹. Similarly, Richard W Patch refers to Juan Campos Lama who in 1960 led a huge strike at the University of San Marcos in Peru when he was in his "balding mid-thirties"¹⁰.

Such professional student leaders are also found at Indian universities; for example, a former student leader of Delhi University who had left the campus over half a decade ago rejoined the University in 1973 as a student—chiefly to contest the Union elections.¹¹ The present study has also shown that there were as many as 15 student leaders who were above 28 years of age, and of these 9 were over 30 years old. In another study, Joseph Di Bona has stressed the immense influence and power exercised by student leaders of ten and nine years' standing at the University of Allahabad.¹² As Shils puts it, "Older, tougher, more ingenious, often seductively attractive, these professional students are often catalysts who agitate lambs into lions".¹³ But these old-timers are not only more ingenious but more resourceful as well: the Delhi University student leader mentioned above owned a fleet of tourist taxis, including four imported cars!

The number of such professional student leaders, however, is bound to be very small, for many student leaders give up their studies and/or activism as they come nearer employment prospects. Secondly, the influence of these professional leaders is by no means limited to students

but extends to both university authorities and political leaders of the state. As a result, the professional student leaders are the most pampered or denounced section of the student leadership. Thirdly, it is these professional student leaders who are more likely than others to make politics their career after leaving the university.

It is, however, interesting to note that most aspirants to the student union offices openly denounce each other as "professional" leaders. This is evidently done because the general mass of the students is thought to disfavour professionalism in their leadership though, interestingly again, every contestant in the union elections fully advertises his past leadership record, and the union offices are usually captured by the professional leaders. It seems that the effectiveness of the professional student leaders referred to by Shils lies in being a professional without getting so branded by the student community.

- ¹ These comprised *all* the past (but still on the rolls) and present office-bearers of (1) the Lucknow University Student Union, associated colleges' student unions, and hostel unions and (2) such office-bearers of different political parties" student wings who were on the rolls but did not fall in the first category.
Further, the data were collected during two academic sessions of 1968-69 and 1969-70 through personal interviews with student leaders (and their parents and guardians wherever possible) with the help of a duly pre-tested interview scheduled on the one hand, and the relevant official records on the other.
- ² P G Altbach (Ed.), *The Student Revolt: A Global Analysis*, Bombay 1970, p 116.
John Searle calls it "the search for the sacred" stressing that the young specially "have a need to believe in something and to act on behalf of something they regard as larger than themselves ... goals that they can regard as somehow transcending their own immediate needs and desires ...". *The Campus War*, Penguin Books, 1972, p 14.
- ³ Calculated from Table 6.10 in *Education in India, (1964-1965)*, Ministry of Education and Youth Services, Government of India, 1970, Vol I, p 199, taking figures of 18 plus age groups alone into consideration as it is around the age of 17 that a student enters the university.
- ⁴ In Donald K. Emmerson (Ed.), *Students and Politics in Developing Nations*, London 1968, p 393.
- ⁵ For example, Chanchal Sarkar, *The Unquiet Campus*, New Delhi 1960; Salig Harrison, *The Most Dangerous Decades*, Madras 1960; A D Ross, *Student Unrest in India*, London 1969; Joseph E Di Bona, *Change and Conflict in the Indian University*, Duke University Monograph No 7, 1969.
- ⁶ Shanti Swarup, "Student Unrest in India", in Bernard Crick and William A Robson, *Protest and Dissent*, Pelican Books, 1970, p 160.
- ⁷ Robert P Myhr, in Donald K Emmerson (Ed.), *Students and Politics in Developing Nations, op.cit.*, p 261.
- ⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset, "University Students and Politics in Underdeveloped Countries", in Lipset (Ed.) *Student Politics*, New York, 1967; p 24.
- ⁹ In Donald K Emmerson (Ed.), *op. cit.*, p 392.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 392.
- ¹¹ In fact there was an influx of "old and tried" student leaders, attached in about equal numbers to the two main political rivals, namely the Jan Sangh's Vidyarthi

Parishad and the student wing of the (ruling) Congress, which wanted to control the Delhi University Students Union. "Who is a Student Leader in Delhi?", *Link*, July 22, 1972.

- ¹² Joseph Di Bona, "Indiscipline and Student Leadership in an Indian University", in Lipset (Ed.) *op.cit.*, pp 381, 386-387.
- ¹³ Edward Shils, "Indian Students: Rather Sadhus than Philistines" *Encounter* XVII, September 1961, p 17.

NOTES

Mathematical Methods for Analysing International Relations

DECISION-MAKING in any sphere of public activity must be preceded, as in technology, by serious scientific research and in our day it is inconceivable without quantitative, mathematical methods. There are objective laws in all fields, including the world of social processes, and these laws must be taken into account in the scientific elaboration of problems.

A scientific theory is not only a means of constructing models, but is itself a special kind of model of the objects of its study. Unlike a direct model (a pattern of reduced size, for instance) a theory is an indirect model, that is, a system of numerous interconnected elements, such as equations, describing the object.

Such a system is definite integral formation: it cannot be resolved into its elements, because these are inseparably linked with one another, calling for a comprehensive study of all its elements and the links between them. This is imperative for scientific analysis. As Lenin said, "We must take not individual fact, but the sum total of facts, without a single exception." The merit of strictly formulating the tasks and methods of investigating the system belongs to dialectical materialism. A brilliant example of this is provided in investigations by Marx and Lenin into the extremely complicated and constantly changing system of economic relations in capitalist society.

The construction and study of models, particularly such complex ones as sociological models, require the use of many branches of modern mathematics: statistical methods of probabilities, correlational analysis, the theory of information, the theory of decisions, and the theory of games. And this, in turn, poses the question of quantification, that is, quantitative measurement of all indices, including qualitative ones. Without this, it is impossible either to compare and interpret in the same terms the results obtained or to apply the mathematical methods.

As a rule, measurement implies a procedure by which the measured object is compared to some standard and acquires numerical expression. Quantitative and qualitative analysis, however, cannot be separated from each other as done by bourgeois scientists. Measurement in this instance is not only a quantitative procedure. In the process of comparing objects,

measurement includes several stages: classification and quantification or scaling (search for quantitative expressions and ratios).

Given proper understanding of the essence of phenomena, the aspects of reality they reflect and the information they yield, it is possible to quantify not only objective but also subjective phenomena, and even such other aspects as, for instance, people's opinion of one another, intellectual level, degree of man's will and volitional qualities (purposefulness of action and behaviour). The question whether the relative importance of the diverse traits of man (society or a phenomenon) should find a place in the model transcends the bounds of pure mathematical methods and should be examined from the philosophical standpoint.

All this plays an important role in the basic functions of scientific theory—scientific explanation and prognostication. *Scientific explanation* is an attempt to link certain known or newly-discovered facts to the laws and hypotheses already established and accepted in theory. If this attempt fails, it becomes necessary to create a new theory or supplement the old one with new laws and hypotheses from which one can obtain the description of the fact to be explained (as was the case with Einstein's Theory of Relativity). *Scientific prognostication* is an effort to obtain information about either some unknown but possibly existing phenomena or those which do not exist at all at the time of prognostication. It is an attempt at establishing a relation to what can or must arise in the future.

Scientific Forecasting

It is obvious that explanation and prognostication are of vast practical importance not only for natural and military sciences but such social sciences as politics, sociology and international affairs. Attempts were made long ago to predict socio-historical processes, but scientific prognostication in this field is possible only on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, dialectical and historical materialism. Marxist-Leninist theory is free from all the subjective and casual appraisals which are typical of bourgeois science. This can be illustrated by examples. In the negotiations for peace in 1918, notwithstanding the onerousness of the terms—Lenin insisted on their acceptance, despite furious opposition from Bukharin, Trotsky and their supporters. He did so because, first, he understood the vital need for a breathing space for the young Soviet state, and secondly, he foresaw that the treaty would not last for long. Only eight months passed, the November events of 1918 in Germany overthrew Kaiser Wilhelm II, and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was annulled.

Another telling example of Marxist scientific prognostication in the field of international relations is provided by the documents of the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik). The Congress gave a profound analysis of the international situation and concluded that the Munich policy of the Western powers was directed at ultimately freeing the hands of the fascist aggressors for war against the USSR as a result of which the most probable opponent of the Soviet

Union in the possible war would be Nazi Germany. It was pointed out that if imperialists unleashed such a war, it would result not only in the defeat of fascism, but also in an inevitable weakening of the whole capitalist system. We know that this forecast came true: Nazi Germany and its allies were beaten, the people of many states put an end to capitalism in their countries and stepped assuredly on to the socialist path of development. Yet another instance of scientific Marxist prediction related to the disintegration of the colonial system after the Second World War. Hardly thirty years have elapsed since, and little is left of the colonial system. Other examples could also be cited to prove the veracity of Marxist-Leninist scientific prognostication in international relations.

Society is a system of extremely complex and dynamic probabilities. To study and analyse society, to explain and forecast social processes scientifically and to plan and direct home and foreign policies, it is necessary to construct a comprehensive set of social models. These are systems correctly reflecting the existing social processes or phenomena and applying objective laws of history. That is why social modelling requires the methods of modern mathematical theories, including the theory of probability, queuing theory and lastly, the theory of games. Games theory is a complex branch of mathematics which is finding increasing application.

Games Theory

There are continual clashes in life between opposing forces, trends, wishes and possibilities. Very often, these clashes assume the form of conflict between two or more parties with diametrically opposite interests. In that event there arise two major problems:

- a) How to foresee the outcome of a conflict if the result of the action of one party depends on the counteraction of the other;
- b) What is to be done to turn the outcome of the conflict to advantage notwithstanding the other party's efforts to prevent this?

The theory of games *helps* to assess these problems quantitatively and gives the answer to the two major questions: how to act and what result to expect? It may be defined as a mathematical theory of choice of optimum decisions in conflicting situations, that is, in situations in which the outcome depends on strategic decisions adopted by the various participants ("players"), who have different and often diametrically opposed interests.

Like many other modern mathematical theories, the theory of games is less concerned with an immediate study of the world around us than elaborating scientific recommendations for the formulation of appropriate decisions. Mathematical theory of games requires quantitative estimates, including the evaluation of the results ("Win") for every one of the players in any possible combination of strategies they choose. Such estimates may be obtained by different methods (including those of the theory of probability) and are taken as initial data. It is noteworthy that

the principles and methods of the theory of games may be applied even where decisions have to be taken without possessing full information about the situation.

From the methodological point of view the task of theory of games, like that of any other theory in applied mathematics, is to construct and analyse models which reflect some definite sphere of phenomena in objective reality. It deals with mathematical models of phenomena occurring in human society. And that gives this applied theory a class character. From the point of view of Marxist dialectics, it is not necessary to examine all the physical or technical strategies of the parties, as do some specialists including the most serious of them, Anatol Rapoport¹. It will suffice if the strategies are considered which correspond to the political (or military) potentialities of the parties and which are not only available, but applicable, by the parties from the point of view of their class and ideology. In the same way expediency (usefulness) in the theory of games turns from the ordinary concrete scientific (and at times simple everyday) conception into a category which has different interpretations and requires a philosophical analysis.

One of the most important principles of players' rational behaviour in infinite games concerns the achievement of aims. A situation can be created in a given game only if each player chooses some definite strategy, desires the situation and is not interested in its destruction. And this is only possible where a situation is so conceived that a player who alters his strategy wins nothing and even loses as a result of the changes. Such situations are called equilibrium points and may be regarded as aims achievable by the players.

Strategy in Antagonism

The achievement of equilibrium points may be the object of agreement between players, since none of them fearing loss will have cause to be the first to break such an agreement. On the other hand, agreement on some non-equilibrium point (a situation in which one of the players can win more by altering his strategy) is meaningless, because there is bound to be a player who is interested in being the first to break the agreement.

It would appear that the thing to do is to always choose a point of equilibrium and to agree on its achievement. But it turns out that in many games no such situation exists. In this case one may resort to the assistance of so called mixed strategy, each component part of which (we shall call it pure strategy) is said to possess some degree of probability.

The availability of strategy in life makes it easier for a player (politician) to adopt decisions. "He who adopts decisions from one occasion to another and does not have a strategy determining all the consequences of the decisions loses much more often than those who have the strategy and employ it", writes Georg Klaus, a prominent scientist from the German Democratic Republic. "Players employing strategy have to adopt

only a few decisions, namely, he must decide what strategy he wants to apply (it is naturally assumed that he has a certain reserve of strategy)".

And there is another point of departure: the philosophical concept of antagonism is far broader than the mathematical. Many contradictions and conflicts, antagonistic in the philosophical sense, must be modelled as non-antagonistic, where the class interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie do not conform to the mathematical concept of antagonism. The peaceful co-existence of the world socialist and capitalist systems, the usefulness of negotiations and the mutual benefit derived from trade clearly do not conform to mathematical antagonism, in the realm of which there can be no mutually advantageous action or negotiations, just as no negotiations or agreements are possible between players in antagonistic games. In non-antagonistic games, on the other hand, talks between the parties are expedient and even desirable, or they can reveal new equilibrium points on the basis of which parties may conclude agreements.

There are of course many class contradictions whose antagonism is obvious from both the philosophical and mathematical points of view. Take for instance the ideological contradictions between socialism and capitalism. There is absolutely no place for compromise there. Any concession to the bourgeoisie would immediately bring an almost irreparable loss to socialism.

Sociology of International Relations

Theoretical points of departure may be made use of as basis for modelling only if the compilers of programmes are conscientious. The subjective use of modelling and prognostication leads to fatal mistakes in the choice of decisions. The information and modelling of international relations on the basis of mathematical methods (including the theory of games) have their limits and may be regarded only as a basis for adopting decisions. A model is not a ready-made decision.

The sociology of international relations cannot be non-class, and their modelling and prognostication by means of the theory of games and other mathematical methods can consequently be based only on the analysis and strict consideration of the class nature of the forces (society, state) participating in the system of these relations. Only with major reservations can categories such as nationalism, class solidarity and socialist internationalism be quantified and taken into account in the process of modelling. *The Marxist sociology of international relations which is based upon the dialectical methods and class approach uses formalization of conflicts as an aid in studying the system of international relations.*

The wide use made by Western scientists of mathematical methods in the study and prognostication of international relations is undoubtedly linked with their efforts to meet the demand of the times (to place research on the level of modern science), on the one hand, and to use science in the search for a "magic formula" which would help politicians to "check" and even "roll back" the socialist system. An instance of this was provided

by the events in Czechoslovakia, where international reaction tried to turn to profit the weakening of the ideological front in order to restore capitalism. Only the firm stand of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries prevented the enemies of socialism from accomplishing their aims.

There are several trends among Western, especially American, sociologists in determining not only the methodology for applying mathematical theories to the analysis of international relations, but also the extent to which science can be adjusted to fit politics. Two of these trends are personified by the "hawks" Herman Kahn and Anatol Rapoport. The difference between them is not in the class content of their conceptions (which is bourgeois in either case), but in the degree of scientific integrity with which they operate with figures and models.

The political position of Kahn, Rapoport and the like in capitalist society may be characterized as "on the top but not on top". Seeking to retain the favour of powers that be and thus remain "on top" Western scientists indulge to a greater or lesser degree in justifying capitalism. Though they elaborate on modern theories, build concepts and models and use ultra-modern machines, Kahn, Rapoport and their friends base their sociological concepts on idealism and metaphysics. They negate social development as a natural historical process in the succession of socio-economic formations, for, if they recognized them, they would also have to concede the inevitability of communism succeeding capitalism.

Neopositivism

Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish between trends of modern bourgeois philosophy. There is much in common for instance, between *analytical philosophy*, which regards analysis of language as the main task of philosophy and *general semantics*, which absolutizes the importance of language as a means of intercourse and denies the objective content of general scientific conceptions and *operationalism* which regards scientific conceptions not as reflections of objective reality, but as a pure logical construction depending only on operations (for instance, measuring) carried out by researchers. The identity is explained by the fact that the three trends stem from the same source—neopositivism.

Neopositivism is now one of the most widespread varieties of Western (particularly American) philosophy. As is well known, it is a system of subjectively idealistic and agnostic views which combine the erroneous conceptions of former positivism (notably the empirio-criticism of Richard Avenarius and Ernst Mach), which claimed that the main task of science was the pure description of facts and feelings and not their explanation, the epistemological scepticism of David Hume which sought to minimize the capacity of intellect in general, exaggerated the relativity of human knowledge and negated the existence of objective truth, and lastly, Kant's denial of the solvability of the fundamental problem of philosophy only in expounding subjective idealistic conceptions in a more subtle form

(as one sees in Rapoport's *Strategy and Conscience*).

Neopositivism negates the ideological character of philosophy enabling its proponents to claim that they are "independent" scientists. Neopositivism in practice bypasses general philosophical problems, calling them "pseudo-problems" which exist only because people do not understand the nature of the language, or distort them and interpret them idealistically. The very fact that neopositivism has given rise to dozens of trends testifies to its shortcomings, narrowness, imperfection and its inability to answer even those questions posed by itself.

In their turn, the trends from neopositivism naturally cannot free themselves of the evils inherent in it. Many neopositivists, according to Eugene Meehan, an American specialist in political science, are more concerned with excluding metaphysics from philosophy than with achieving something constructive in the process of philosophical work.² That is precisely why, in their search for a way out of the impasse, many Western scientists clutch at the straws of several such trends at once. Therein lies the explanation of the "versatility" of certain bourgeois philosophers.

In the struggle against the dialectical Marxist-Leninist sociology, the neopositivists cite mouldy theories long ago disproved by science and life, like the "Organic Theory of Society" advanced in his day by Herbert Spencer. Mechanically linking human society to a biological organism, Spencer and his followers sought to reduce the laws governing society to the biological laws of nature. The neopositivists are doing particularly the same thing.³ One of them, French economist and sociologist Jean Fourastie, openly urges the application of natural laws to the social sphere.⁴ While the classics of Marxism-Leninism too noted the analogy between the development of society and biological evolution⁵, and took it into account, they never reduced the diversity of human society to the operation of simple biological factors.

War Games

The political propositions of the bourgeois philosophers raise no doubts. The scientific-sounding names of their books, *The Brain and the Machine*, *Arguments, Games, Debate, Strategy and Conscience* or *The Year 2000: A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-three Years* are simply a cover for more or less open apology for capitalism and an attack on Marxism-Leninism. "Bourgeois ideology", says the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "assumes a variety of forms and uses the most diverse methods and means of deceiving the working people. But they all boil down to the same thing—defence of the declining capitalist system."⁶

Bourgeois scientists often resort to mathematical methods and the modelling of international relations only to appear objective and to adduce weightier arguments in justification of their conclusions. The formalization of international relations, its modelling and the relevant mathematical methods of investigating them seem to bewitch many Western statesmen. In their efforts to persuade others, they try to convince themselves that it

is enough to invent a successful mathematical model to ensure the West's victory over the communist world.

Many of them, in their attempt to supplant the truly scientific approach in the theory of games by cold-war constructions, reject all methods but war for solving the conflicts between the two systems. As aptly put by Walter Lippman, for Barry Goldwater and his ilk "all conflicts and disputes must end either in victory or defeat".⁷ Absolutizing the non-compromise situation in the theory of games (zero-sum games), American scientists willy-nilly turn into war hawks.

In the United States, there is even a special "mathematical theory of war", whose authors include one of the leading hawks in the country, Professor Oskar Morgenstern of Princeton University, who has linked the cold war imposed upon the world by American imperialism to poker, an original zero-sum game, and gives American diplomacy the following advice without a shadow of irony: "Although the situations are not completely identical in poker and the cold war, they are similar enough so that something substantial can be learned from good poker principles."⁸ Former U S Defence Secretary Robert S McNamara, who is celebrated for his passion to express phenomena in figures, long sought a magic formula for the ratio of armed forces in Vietnam. It was first 5:1, then 6:1 and finally 10:1, in his opinion, to bring victory to the United States.

Flexible Response and Escalation

This attempt to explain scientifically but popularly to the public at large the essence of US policy is sheer profanation of the theory of games itself. Some bourgeois scientists and politicians, including A Rapoport, call for various kinds of ideological compromise and put forward all sorts of "convergence", "ideological disarmament", "ideological co-existence" and other theories. Bringing forth for the benefit of immature minds such slogans as "ideological pacification", "de-ideolization", "democratization" and "liberalization" of communism, they hope thus to lull the vigilance of the peoples in order to carry through little by little their ideas in support of capitalism.

But these theories barely hold together. They must be debunked both politically and scientifically. The same Rapoport, suggesting as the only alternative to war, *not peaceful coexistence of the two systems* but their *ideological coexistence* contradicts his *scientific principles*, from which it logically follows that, precisely from the point of view of the games theory, such co-existence is inadmissible (it was shown above that the *ideological contradictions* between capitalism and socialism are antagonistic from both the philosophical and the mathematical points of view, which Rapoport, being a scientist, will have understood). If we add that Rapoport denies the possibility of complete and general disarmament, the situation is quite clear, and his sympathies for capitalism and devotion to the imperialist cause are beyond doubt.

From mathematical models of international relations, American

scientists draw two almost diametrically opposite conclusions. "Some of our mathematical analysts", writes Ralph Lapp, a well-known physicist and publicist, "have become fascinated with the results of their calculus. Their computers tell them that under certain circumstances, we could score a "win" in a nuclear war. Unhappily the computer arrives at this result only because it has no feeling: If Country A loses 30 million dead and 27 per cent of its economy...the computer pronounces Country A the winner. One wonders how much consolation that will be to Country A".⁹

The other conclusion drawn by theoreticians divorced from political realities is that an accidental war may be precluded if electronic locks are put on atomic weapons. Professor Ferdinand Martin of the Graz Technical Institute says electronic computers have told him that the chances are 80 to 85 per cent against an accidental war in the near future. Such conclusions are followed by assertions fraught with dangerous consequences that little wars in our day of "nuclear confrontation" and "balance of fear" are admissible and that those responsible for them will escape retribution.

It was on the basis of these theoretical appraisals that the Pentagon drew up its strategy of flexible response during the late 1950s and a few years later Herman Kahn elaborated his well-known theory of escalation.¹⁰ The American scientist did not confine himself to theorizing. With the aid of electronic computers at the Hudson Institute, he constructed a 'flawless' model of controlled war. This mad political calculation lays down the method of gradual, strictly limited employment of nuclear weapons without provoking a retaliatory nuclear blow against the United States or a thermo-nuclear world war.

Militarism in US Science

The sharp criticism voiced everywhere of the policy of escalation in accordance with Kahn's model has not deterred its authors. Four years later he published another book in which, again proceeding from the application of mathematical methods, he introduces a model for mankind in AD 2000.¹¹ Together with co-author Anthony J Wiener, he predicts the prosperity of the capitalist system in the remaining 33 years of the present century. The picture they paint is especially rosy when it comes to the US.

Scientific integrity once again betrays Herman Kahn. He tries to depict the world 33 years hence just as the present-day rulers of the US would like to see it. Construction of models without consideration of basic trends of socio-economic development today brings the authors to an impasse in their own book. Kahn and Wiener retrospectively lose, for instance, the model for the first third of the twentieth century. Had the world followed their model, it turns out, there would have been no First and Second World Wars, no October Revolution, no economic crisis in the 1930s and no fascism in power anywhere.

It would be wrong to believe that Kahn alone personifies militarism

in American science. There are twelve big educational establishments, including Columbia, Michigan and Stanford Universities and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and hordes of philosophers and mathematicians working for the Pentagon's defence research institute. The Pentagon uses the services of about 300 research centres at home and as many in forty other countries as well as 350 research corporations, including the well-known RAND, to draw up US foreign policy strategic plans.¹² The electronic computer centres have card indices listing millions of statesmen, politicians and party functionaries of different countries.

There can be no doubt that the further militarization of science in the US will bring it still closer to serving the monopolies. It must be said in this connection that the wide application of mathematical methods (including the theory of games) and the use of electronic computers will do little to change the political direction of research.

Technocrats and Politics

Bourgeois propaganda goes out of its way to prove that the political weather in our days is made by scientists. Eric Hoffer goes so far as to affirm that the growth of automation will make 90 per cent of the population of the US redundant. The US was built by the masses but they have no future. The future is now made in the laboratories built by supermen, by intellectuals, not of the masses¹³.

In the West, many articles, books and collections of essays are published on the problem of scientists' participation in international politics. Most of them assert that the scientist should play the chief role in setting foreign policy issues. For instance, Warner Shilling, the author of a big article in one of those publications, speaking of the scientific advisers' department set up in the Department of State in 1951, wrote that "it has yet to become a point of vantage in the determination of high departmental policy".¹⁴

The rulers of the capitalist world are well aware of the significance of the ideological struggle against the world socialist system and the other forces of progress. That is why they have mobilized the best scientists and most advanced technology, including electronic computers, to serve their policy. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate the influence exerted by bourgeois scientists on the framing of their countries' policies and absolutize the mathematical methods of prognosticating and modelling international relations. They are "on the top but not on top."

One cannot but agree with French scientist Phillip Bauchard when he writes: "Technocrats naively believe that it is they who direct the policy of the leaders in power; in practice, it is the other way round: the leaders use technocrats to foster their aims, keep them in the background and push them to the fore only when they need a scapegoat"¹⁵.

As developments show, the ideological conflict, whose main element is the struggle between Marxist-Leninist ideology and the man-hating

ideology of moribund imperialism, is growing sharper the world over. This struggle knows no compromise.

V A GAITONDE

- ¹ A Rapoport, *Strategy and Conscience*, New York, London.
- ² Eugene Meehan, *The Theory and Methods of Political Analysis*, Homewood, 1965, p 11.
- ³ Rapoport, *op.cit.*, p 357.
- ⁴ Jean Fourastie, *Idee Majeures, pour un Humanisme de la Societe Scientifique*, Paris 1966 p 186.
- ⁵ V I Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol I Moscow 1966, pp 166-167.
- ⁶ *The Road to Communism*, Documents of the 22nd Congress of the C P S U, Moscow 1961, p 500.
- ⁷ *New York Herald Tribune*, March 3, 1964.
- ⁸ *New York Times Magazine*, February 5, 1961, p 21.
- ⁹ Ralph Lapp, *Kill and Overkill*, New York 1962 p 19.
- ¹⁰ Herman Kahn, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios*, London 1965.
- ¹¹ Herman Kahn and Anthony J Wiener, *The Year 2000: A Framework of Speculation on the Next Thirty-three Years*, New York 1967.
- ¹² R Ginsburg, *U S Military Strategy in the Sixties*, New York 1965.
- ¹³ Eric Hoffer, *The Temper of Our Time*, New York 1968.
- ¹⁴ Warner R Shilling, *Scientists, Foreign Policy and Politics*, Columbia University Press, New York-London 1964, p 165.
- ¹⁵ P Bauchard, *Les Technocrates et le Pouvoir*, Paris 1966.

Property Rights under the Constitution

IT is often assumed that the right to property, especially in relation to private ownership of the means of production, is the basic criterion of a free society. This widespread notion is shared even by students and practitioners of law who overlook the economic and political foundations of the legal structure.

The traditional concept of property rights received its hardest knock at the 1917 October Revolution which established a new system of property relations in the "socialist sixth of the world". The right of private ownership was dethroned with the socialization of the means of production: the axioms on the virtues of free enterprise and *laissez-faire* expansion to prosperity have since been openly challenged and discredited by the advance of the socialist system and ideology.

The crisis of capitalism in the rest of the world was partly responsible for the increasing intervention of the state in economic matters. State control of the economy has come to stay for good. This trend is to be attributed not merely to economic but also to political compulsions. Universal adult franchise posed an inherent threat to the propertied classes. In the one-man-one-vote game, bourgeois parliamentary democracy was found playing a double role, on the one hand defending private property rights and on the other, imposing curbs on private enterprise in the name of general welfare and social justice. This phenomenon came to be known as social engineering, welfare state or 'creeping socialism'.

Parliamentary democracy, because of this simultaneous role of saviour and destroyer of private ownership rights, has passed into its most serious contradictions. It has failed miserably to ensure socio-economic justice within the legal framework of private enterprise. The elected representatives to parliament, mostly votaries of the sanctity of private property and free enterprise, in a bid to stem the tide of contradictions, are forced to mediate between the employer and the employee, the landowner and the landless as they are supposed to bring about welfare and justice to *all* sections of society. This has led to governmental interference in almost every sector of the economy.

The task of mediation is not so easy. Baffled by the breakdown of the so called self-adjusting mechanism, parliamentarism has had recourse

to tribunals for adjudicating labour demands, controls and ceilings for curtailment of monopolies and concentration of wealth, monetary measures for containing inflation, and public undertakings for boosting the sagging economy. By and large, the supporters of private property and the parliamentarians have been compelled to accept controlled economy as a panacea for the ills of the capitalist system.

In underdeveloped countries, with agriculture as the principal production sector and growing population exerting a strain on political institutions, even if they were to adopt controlled economy as a credo, the extent of the problem could easily be imagined. The story of parliamentarism in all underdeveloped countries is one of loss of face and widening credibility gaps for all the political parties in government and opposition which guard the right of private ownership of the means of production as the very quintessence of freedom. At the same time, parliamentarism is compelled to lay its hands on property rights in order to meet at least some of the tall election promises. The situation is invariably one where the electorate at large believes, or is told to believe, that the promised socio-economic justice can be achieved without sacrificing the cherished ideals of parliamentarism, among which private property is the most formidable.

II

Freedom and Property

Under Article 19 (1) (f) and 19 (1) (g) of the Indian Constitution, it is a fundamental right "to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business." Significantly, these rights are classed under "Right to Freedom" meaning thereby that property acquired or held by practising any profession, occupation, trade or business is as much an exercise of freedom as freedom of speech and expression, and other freedoms. Articles 31, 31A, 31B and 31C also deal with property rights and are grouped under the heading "Right to Property". But strictly speaking, the individual derives the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property, by practising any profession or occupation, under Articles 19 (1) (f) and 19 (1) (g) and not under Articles 31, 31A, 31B and 31C. Article 31 ensures freedom of trade, commerce and intercourse throughout the territory of India. Inasmuch as the Constitution has reinforced a socio-economic system where individual property is held sacrosanct, I propose here to deal only with Articles 31, 31A, 31B and 31C.

Broadly stated, Articles 31A to C are meant presumably to overcome the severities of Article 31 and other provisions, especially those in Part III of the Constitution which deals with fundamental rights. The law as stated in Articles 31 (1) and 31 (2) is somewhat analogous to that laid down in Article V of the amendments to the United States Constitution¹ and its Fourteenth Amendment² with one difference: the 'Due Process' clause is explicitly stated to mean the law as laid down in Article 31 (2)

which, after the Twentyfifth Amendment, is free from any challenge under Articles 14, 19 or 31.

Article 31 (1) is intended to be a safeguard against executive inroads except under the authority of law, that is, by law validly made by organs competent to make it. And once a person is duly deprived of his property by the authority of law, Article 19 does not come into the picture at all. What this authority of law through which a person can be deprived of his property is laid down in Article 31 (2). It is acquisition or requisition of property, except where such acquisition or requisition is not such as contemplated in Article 31 (2) (A) for a public purpose and on payment of compensation which may be fixed by such law or which may be determined in accordance with such principles and given in such manner as may be specified in such law. However, though 31(2) regulates deprivation except under the stipulations laid down, it is not a shield to cases covered by Articles 31 (4), 31 (5) and 31 (6). In substance, subject to the exceptions made in Articles 31 (4), 31 (5) and 31 (6) and to the mode of deprivation prescribed under Article 31 (2), a person has the right "to acquire, hold and dispose of property" in any manner by engaging himself in any profession, occupation, trade or business of his choice subject to such reasonable restrictions as may be imposed under article 19 (5).

Insulating Agrarian Reforms

Articles 31A, 31B and 31C although placed under "Right to Property", actually form further exceptions to the rule that a person cannot be deprived of his property except under recourse to Article 31. But Article 31A is intended to apply to the acquisition by the state of private agricultural land and other rights therein for promoting agrarian reform and not for any other purpose. It is also intended to cover other kinds of property as are mentioned in 31A (b), (c), (d) and (e). Article 31A has the effect of *insulating* certain legislative acts under Articles 31 (2), 19 and 14. The net result is that acts of the character falling within 31A shall not be deemed to be void on the ground that such acts take away or abridge the rights conferred by Articles 14, 19 and 31. Since recourse to 31A is an exceptional step, its operation is restrained by two important provisos: presidential assent for state legislation and payment of compensation at market value for land under personal cultivation and held within the ceiling limits under the relevant state law.

Article 31B is intended to be an *additional insulation* to legislative measures in the direction of agrarian reform. Independent of 31A, it insulates land reform measures specially mentioned in Schedule IX. If 31A can save them, so much the better, but if it fails for any reason, land reforms can survive by virtue of 31B. Further, it is not incumbent on the legislature to justify the validity of these measures even if, both under 31A and 31B, the normal justifications to acquire private property for a public purpose and on payment of compensation are totally absent.

Article 31C is intended to be an explanatory as well as a saving

clause, clothing Articles 31A and 31B with reasons for actions undertaken under these Articles and further affording immunities from the pervasive Articles 14, 19 and 31. But the scope of Article 31C must be understood subject to the observation made in *Keshavananda Bharathi v. State of Kerala*³

Original Article 31

It is interesting to compare the law as it stands today with what it was at the time when the Constitution came into force. Within a short span of twenty-five years Article 31 was subjected to not less than seven amendments, of which the First (1951), the Fourth (1955), the Seventeenth (1964) and Twentyfifth (1971) are the most important. Article 31 in its original form reads as follows:

31. Compulsory acquisition of property— (1) No person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law.
- (2) No property, movable or immovable including any interest in, or in any company owning, any commercial or industrial undertaking, shall be taken possession of or acquired for public purposes under any law authorizing the taking of such possession or such acquisition, unless the law provides for compensation for the property taken possession of or acquired and either fixes the amount of the compensation, or specifies the principles on which, and the manner in which, the compensation is to be determined and given.
- (3) No such law as is referred to in clause (2) made by the Legislature of a State shall be in effect unless such law, having been reserved for the consideration of the President, has received his assent.
- (4) If any Bill pending at the commencement of this Constitution in the Legislature of a State has, after it has been passed by such Legislature, been reserved for the consideration of the President and has received his assent, then, notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the law so assented to shall not be called in question in any court on the ground that it contravenes the provision of clause (2).
- (5) Nothing in clause (2) shall affect—
 - (a) the provision of any existing law other than a law to which the provisions of clause (6) apply, or
 - (b) the provisions of any law which the State may hereafter make—
 - (i) for the purpose of imposing or levying any tax or penalty, or
 - (ii) for the promotion of public health or the prevention of danger to life or property, or
 - (iii) in pursuance of any agreement entered into between the Government of the Dominion of India or the Government of India and the Government of any other country, or otherwise with respect of property declared by law to be evacuee property.
- (6) Any law of the State enacted not more than eighteen months before the commencement of this Constitution may within three months from such commencement be submitted to the President for his certification; and thereupon, if the President by public notification

so certifies, it shall not be called in question in any court on the ground that it contravenes the provisions of clause (2) of this article or has contravened the provisions of sub-section (2) of section 299 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Amendments Galore

Article 31, as it then stood, was almost identical with provisions of the American Constitution. Deprivation or taking possession of property can be undertaken only for public purposes: payment of compensation—fair and reasonable—was also provided for. The framers of the Constitution piously thought that Article 31 (2), with its exceptions, would provide a smooth voyage to all Bills intended for abolition of the zamindari system and other feudal land tenures. But a series of decisions rendered by High Courts commencing with *Kameshwar Singh v. State of Bihar*⁴ and later by the Supreme Court in *State of Bihar v. Kameshwar Singh*⁵ rocked parliament from its stupor. This led to the enactment of the First Amendment (1951) to Article 31. The parliament then added articles 31A and 31B with retrospective effect. Further jolts were yet to come. In *State of West Bengal v. Bela Banerji*⁶, *Subodh Gopal v. State of West Bengal*,⁷ *Dwarkanadas Shrinivas v. Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Co. Ltd.*⁸ and *Saghir Ahmed v. State of Uttar Pradesh*,⁹ the Supreme Court rendered decisions that notwithstanding the First Amendment, payment of assessment and amount of compensation to be paid was justiciable and 'taking away' even for a temporary period was tantamount to the lawful owner's deprivation of possession and hence compensation was payable. To overcome these hurdles the Fourth Amendment (1954) was made to Article 31 (2), inserting 31 (2) (A), and further amending Article 31A. That was not the end. It required another amendment, the Seventeenth (1964), to extend the scope of land reform legislation to ryotwari and other tenures.

With the Seventeenth Amendment (1964) the law relating to right to property appeared to have acquired a settled interpretation. But soon, two important decisions of the Supreme Court had an unsettling effect. In *Golaknath v. State of Punjab*¹⁰ the Supreme Court laid down that thereafter parliament had no right to amend any portion of Part III, and in *R C Cooper v. Union of India*¹¹ (otherwise known as the Bank Nationalization case) again the principles regulating the payment of compensation as well as the Act's nexus with public purpose were held to be justiciable. It was further held that Article 19 (1) (f) and Article 31 (2) are not mutually exclusive and that the court had the power to determine the reasonableness of the restrictions, inasmuch as state action under Article 31 (2) was nonetheless imposition of restrictions abridging or eating into the rights guaranteed to the individual in Part III. This directly led to the enactment of the Twentyfourth and the Twentyfifth Amendments. By the Twenty-fourth Amendment the right of parliament to amend Part III was affirmed; and by the Twentyfifth Amendment, clause 2 of Article 31 (2) was amended, proviso 31 (2) (B) was added to Article 31 (2) and 31C was newly

inserted. The Twentyninth and Thirtyfourth Amendments add only some important land reform measures to Schedule IX. The far-reaching effects of *Keshavananda Bharathi v. State of Kerala* are yet to be seen.^{1,2}

III

Omelette without Breaking Egg

Let not the spate of amendments to Article 31 confound us to the illusion that the right to property has been done away with. The idea of total nationalization of the means of production, that is, abolition of private ownership is nowhere in the Constitution or the Amendments; even the remotest analogy to the Soviet Union or People's China is out of the question. But for the non-justiciability of the compensation to be paid for acquisition or requisition for a public purpose, and the exceptions stated in Articles 31A, 31B and 31C, Article 31 stands as it was inscribed into the Constitution. The sanctity of private property remains untouched as before and the owner of a property cannot be deprived of it except in the manner prescribed in Articles 31 (1) and 31 (2). This unmistakably reveals that private ownership of the means of production, guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (f), and subject to 19 (5), still remains the foundation of law and of all socio-economic relations.

The amendments have perhaps tamed and subdued private property relations in a few selected fields, but without really affecting the right of ownership of the means of production. In the second place, the amendments are introduced with a view to subserve the Directive Principles of State Policy which are meant to overcome the ugly and undesirable features in the body politic in the name of extending social justice to the oppressed and the downtrodden. This aspect of the matter clearly reveals the socio-political philosophy of the framers of the Constitution and what the Constitution actually spells out. The Constitution-makers held the right of private ownership of the means of production as sanctified, forming the basis of all property relations. At the same time they were apprehensive lest these relations become capitalistic in character. The Directive Principles of State Policy indicate their apprehensions. They were opposed to monarchy and feudalism from which the country had suffered most. The legacies of the new India included, along with monarchy and feudalism, capitalist relations slowly exhibiting their sharp edges. The path of Constitution-making was paved with stout intentions for a welfare state avoiding the contradictions and crises of capitalism. After twenty-four years, it has become obvious that welfarism even when dubbed as 'socialism', is nothing more than the imposition of a few ceilings or controls, and the issue of licences or permits. The abolition of private ownership of the means of production is not, and has never been, on the agenda.

The question is whether this type of controlled economy can pay for the required or desired welfare measures and still leave scope for rapid economic growth, capital formation and the removal of poverty. This is where parliamentarism, as mentioned earlier, comes in. Almost all parties

in India except, the Marxists hold that a socio-economic order based on the freedom to own private property is the very core of a free society. But they are under pressure to do 'something' to alleviate the lot of the masses without whose vote they cannot hope to be in power or in active politics for long. Caught in this dilemma, parliamentarians, steeped in the sanctity of private property, make amendment after amendment to the Constitution in a wild goose chase. There is no better commentary on the futile politics of containing the dire consequences of private property right without impairing it in the slightest.

L SRIKANTIAH

- ¹ Article V: No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation. (1791), "Amendments to the Constitution of the United States", *Information Please Almanac*, Dan Golenpaul (Ed.), Simon and Schuster, New York 1967, p 569.
- ² Article XIV: Section 1... nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law: nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. (1868). *Information Please Almanac, op.cit.*, p 570.
- ³ *All India Reporter*, (AIR) 1973, Supreme Court (SC) 1461.
- ⁴ A I R 1951 Patna 91.
- ⁵ A I R 1952 S C 252.
- ⁶ A I R 1954 S C 171.
- ⁷ A I R 1954 S C 92.
- ⁸ A I R 1954 S C 119.
- ⁹ A I R 1954 S C 729.
- ¹⁰ A I R 1967 S C 1643.
- ¹¹ A I R 1970 S C 564.
- ¹² A I R 1973 S C 1461.

BOOK REVIEW

Review Article

Silver Jubilee with No Silver Lining

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD, *CONFLICTS AND CRISIS*, Sangam Books, Orient Longman Limited, Bombay 1974, Pp 160, Rs 6.

POLITICS of the ruling classes has always been in conflict with that of the working class and its allies. It is reflected from right to left across the Indian spectrum. The economic and political crisis of the country is the culmination of ruling class policies for capitalist development at a time when world capitalism itself is shaking to its very foundations. The bankruptcy of the policies, and the conflict between the classes form the subject of EMS Namboodiripad's *Conflicts and Crisis*.

This book of 21 chapters begins with a flashback to the dawn of independence when Mahatma Gandhi, disillusioned by the communal holocaust and the animosity between the two nascent states of the subcontinent, refrained from participating in the festivities. Whatever he stood and fought for had lost their meaning. He saw also the seeds of disruption within the Congress Party: the battle-royal had started between its organizational and ministerial wings—between Kripalani and Nehru—the forerunner of the Nehru-Tandon clash in 1951, the Kamaraj Plan in the last days of Nehru and the bitter controversy in the post-Nehru period. As Gandhiji then, so too have the people been disillusioned with Congress policies. This was one of the reasons for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to abstain from the Jubilee Year celebrations in 1972. The relevant extracts are quoted from the CPI (M) statement.

With a semi-fascist terror raging in West Bengal, with widespread repression in other parts, with mounting economic misery of the people after 25 years of independence, and with the threat of an authoritarian one-party dictatorship coming from the ruling party, it would be dishonouring the memory of the martyrs to participate in the official celebrations which are really made to give only a popular boost to the government and the Congress Party¹.

Between independence and the Jubilee Year there have been various twists and turns in internal politics as well as in the correlation of international forces:

The rapid growth of the Soviet Union's economic and military power was accompanied by equally epoch-making advances in the European people's democratic states, as well as in China. Here therefore was a new world, a rapidly growing world of struggle against capitalism, and which was prepared to give as much help as possible to such newly independent developing countries as India. These changes in the world situation were taking place in an internal situation in which ...the heroic struggle waged by the rural masses of Telangana and several other (though much less spectacular) struggles, as well as the magnificent electoral victories won in the 1952 general elections by the Communist Party in the states of Travancore-Cochin, composite Madras, West Bengal and Tripura showed that the advance of the socialist camp in the international world was having its impact on the internal politics of India. ²

Mendacious Leftism and Non-Alignment

These changes necessitated a reappraisal of internal and foreign policies and brought about the Congress Party's 'leftist' stance. In foreign affairs non-alignment which in the beginning was a cover for alignment with imperialism was subsequently transformed into an instrument of bargaining with both the camps, and thereby opened a phase of what is called the "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai" and "Rusi-Hindi Bhai Bhai" politics. The Telangana peasants' armed struggle which "should have continued not with a view to overthrow the Nehru government but for defending the land that was seized in the course of the anti-Nizam struggle and for persuading the Union government to agree to a negotiated settlement" led to a complete reappraisal of the socio-economic forces operating in the country, resulting on the one side in the Bhoodan movement and on the other in land reforms and the Congress slogan adopted at Avadi of the 'Socialist Pattern of Society'. These changes along with the various political splits and shifts are covered in 13 chapters. The Avadi socialist pattern had nothing to do with socialism. However it did confuse both the right and left opposition. When the Second Plan frame was drafted by experts from socialist countries who "joined the bourgeois experts of the Government of India", it caused a great debate within and outside the Congress. While it led to the formation of the Swatantra Party on the right, failure to understand the complex character of the shift created ideological confusion within the left opposition which gave rise to differences even within the Communist Party. A section, which took a superficial view of the apparently anti-monopoly and anti-landlord measures adopted by the Congress Party and its government, failed to note that even these measures were essentially in the interests of the very classes and strata against whom they were supposed to be directed. "Not only did they help the ruling classes

economically in the sense of facilitating capitalist development in the country; politically too, they strengthened the ruling classes by simultaneously weakening the right and left opposition to the ruling party".³

The Palghat session of the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party in 1956 rejected by an overwhelming majority the demand for unity of what was described as "all progressive democratic forces from the Congress to the communists". It is this line, rejected by the undivided Communist Party, that is being followed after the split by the present Communist Party of India.

EMS devotes a full chapter to the Andhra-Kerala elections and assesses the impact of the 'leftward' shift of the Congress. The defeat of the Communist Party in the mid-term elections in Andhra in 1955 marked the beginning of a process through which the Party in one of its strongest bases began to get weaker and disintegrate. The painful introspection forced on the leaders and ranks of the party by the electoral defeat so divided it from top to bottom that, within a few months it ceased to be the expression of the unity of will and action which it has always been held to be.⁴

In Andhra, party members went to the polls with high hopes and ended with a small number of seats. At the same time, they had to fight their internal ideological-political battle on the 'leftward' political shift of the Congress under the shadow of such a major electoral defeat. Though other units had to fight this ideological-political battle, they were not handicapped by the stunning defeat in Andhra. As the organization remained intact in Kerala the Communist Party was able to come to office in 1957.

All Opposition Disconcerted

The Socialist Party fared the worst and the 'leftward' shift of the Congress led to a total disintegration of that party. Nehru's political strategy (which was repeated by Indira Gandhi in 1967 and led to the 'great split' within the Congress) helped the Congress Party to consolidate itself, defeat and weaken its enemies.

In the book, the attitude of the Congress-led Central government towards non-Congress governments comes under scathing attack. In Kerala in 1957 and within a decade all over India, the Congress was beaten in the elections. In 1957 the Communist Party came to office in Kerala and in 1967 non-Congress coalition governments were formed in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Hariyana and Madhya Pradesh as well as in Pondicherry, Delhi and Manipur covering 67.57 per cent of the total population. But these governments were not allowed to last long. Indira Gandhi, as the leader of the Congress Party (described in the book as the "arch toppler in the making") learnt the art in the process of dismissing the elected communist Government of Kerala in 1959.

In the chapter titled "Anti-China Hysteria" EMS points out that the Communist Party's "political line of opposition to the bourgeois-landlord

government even while supporting those of its policies which are anti-imperialist and anti-feudal" was the correct one and helped the party and the working class to consolidate its ranks and rally broader democratic forces. It was in such a situation that the anti-China hysteria was unleashed. It was so effective that all the right reactionary forces and non-communist left opposition parties united on a "programme of unashamed chauvinism against Communist China and 'its agent in India' the Communist Party." It had its disastrous consequences for the internal economy and polity of the country: the rise of fissiparous forces, communal riots and provincial rivalries. Namboodiripad examines these in four chapters.

Opening Pandora's Box

Out of this crisis Nehru saved his position by dropping Krishna Menon and initiating the Kamaraj Plan. Soon after his death, factionalism within the Congress developed into a battle of succession ultimately disrupting the whole organization in 1969-70. By the time, the main opposition, the Communist Party, was split in two on the question of assessing the 'leftward' shift in the policies of the Congress. The 'great split' within the Congress in 1969 followed the 'left oriented' political strategy of Indira Gandhi, adopted "to survive the storm that was sweeping the political skies of India". Assessing the impact of the split on the opposition Namboodiripad says:

This split of the ruling party, however, had its impact on the opposition in general, and on the left opposition in particular. A section of the latter, for instance, drew the conclusion that the two Congresses represented two class forces—the Syndicate representing the monopoly capitalists and landlords while the Indira Gandhi group was progressive, adopting such policies as helped the people to combat the influence of landlords and monopolists. There was, however, another section in the left opposition which thought that while the differences between the two groups on policy issues were important from the tactical point of view and could be used by the radical opposition to advance the people's militant struggles, there was no difference between the two from the strategical point of view.⁵

From this difference between the two groups of left opposition arose two tactical approaches to the ruling Congress headed by the Prime Minister.

The former thought that the 'progressive' nature of the policies of the ruling Congress required that the left opposition should render all support to the ruling Congress and its governments in order to defeat the efforts of the right opposition whose ranks had now been joined by the Syndicate Congress. The latter group within the left opposition, on the other hand, suggested that while giving limited support on the specific issues on which the stand adopted by the ruling Congress and its governments helped the struggle against imperialism, feudalism or monopoly, the left opposition should never abandon the

struggle against the ruling Congress and its government which are essentially pursuing the same class policies as the Syndicate Congress and other parties of the right opposition. It was these differences within the left opposition that were cleverly used by the ruling Congress to bring down the two United Front governments of Kerala and West Bengal.⁶

These different lines led to defection of the Right Communist Party to the Congress led by Indira Gandhi, and of the S S P and the Syndicate which formed what was called the 'grand alliance'. The unity of the left opposition parties was broken by the Congress split, and Namboodiripad wishes

... that if only the unity of the left opposition parties was not broken as it was broken after the Congress split—if the Right Communist Party and the PSP had not joined the Congress bandwagon and the SSP had not nursed illusions about the 'grand alliance' parties—the left democratic parties as a whole would have been represented in the fifth Lok Sabha in far larger numbers than they were.⁷

New Manoeuvres and Resistance

Subsequent events once again proved that the policies of the Congress Party whether in the name of Avadi Socialism or *Garibi Hatao* were pursued against the masses and in favour of the bourgeois-landlord classes. These policies hence led to rapid disillusionment among the masses and to serious economic crisis in the Jubilee Year. The disenchantment, which was sought to be arrested in the process of supporting the Bangla Desh struggle, was revived after the victory of the people in that country. The support to Bangla Desh itself arose out of big changes in the international arena.

The Nixon-Kissinger initiative for normalizing the relations between China and the United States, as well as between USSR and the United States, had just come into the open. The United States, the USSR and China were thus on the point of coming out as the biggest three in world politics, each of them interested in a *detente*, while each of them was also manoeuvring with one against the other. India's support was of great significance for the USSR in this triangular relationship, while Soviet support was equally important for India.

This, therefore, was the beginning of a new phase of India's external relations—a phase of continuous manoeuvre between India and the United States, India and the USSR and India and China. The ruling classes therefore came to acquire a position in which they could be relatively independent in dealing with all the three major powers in world politics. This capacity for manoeuvre did, of course, ultimately depend on the economic power that they acquired, since a weak India would not be able to use the new advantageous position that had arisen because of the new world situation. But the very fact that they *could* manoeuvre prevented them from being completely dependent on one

or other of the big powers in the world.⁸

Internally new manoeuvres are adopted by the ruling party to perpetuate itself in power. Instead of resolving the crisis in favour of the toiling millions, the rulers have unleashed a reign of terror. It is evident in the assault on the organized working class, the rigging up of elections in West Bengal, attacks on the CPI(M) and its allies as well as on the trade union and other mass organizations. Warning against such trends, Namboodiripad says:

...Every party and mass organization which is not prepared to toe the line of the ruling party will be forcibly prevented from exercising its legitimate rights. This realization is gradually coming to all these left and democratic parties as well as to mass organizations which are trying to overcome their mutual suspicions and prejudices and come together in joined struggles. The most conscious elements among them are also realizing the need to create an effective political force, which in course of time will provide a viable alternative to the Congress regime.

That the Congress ranks too will have, sooner or later, to join this section is clear from the fact that despite the bans and attacks on such organizations of radical Congressmen as the Congress Forum for Socialist Action, Congressmen are also coming out in protest against backsliding on policies such as land reforms and the takeover of the wholesale trade in foodgrains.⁹

At the end of the Jubilee Year, Congress leaders were trying to change the "leftist" postures and make a turn to the right. What is the way out for the people?

The policies pursued by the Government of India have led to increasing misery for the common people and also to the current crisis of the whole economy. A way out of this impasse cannot be found within the framework to which the *Garibi Hatao* regime sticks as doggedly as the pre-split Congress rulers did. Namboodiripad wants a total reversal of policies in an anti-foreign, anti-capitalist, anti-landlord and anti-monopoly direction.

K R S NAIR

¹ *Conflicts and Crisis*, p 9.

² *Ibid.*, p 27.

³ *Ibid.*, p 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 116.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 116-117.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p 125.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 131.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 138.

THE KERALA FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Announces the introduction of a new Scheme for financial assistance to Technocrats.

Any person who holds a Degree/Diploma in any branch of Engineering/Technology/Management or experience in Industry is eligible for assistance.

SPECIAL FEATURES—Provides 90% of the cost of the Project.

Levies no application fees, but only a nominal registration fee.

MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE—Upto Rs. Two lakhs for one technocrat and Three lakhs if more than one.

Easy Repayment Terms
Low Rate Of Interest
Long Credit Period.

For Details :

THE KERALA FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Head Offices : Vellayambalam, Trivandrum-695001.

Telephones: 60319 & 62237

Branch Offices :

1. Chittoor Road,
Cochin-682011.
Tel: 33745

2. Feroke Buildings,
Kallai Road, Calicut.
Tel: 76719.

Sub Offices :

1. District Industries Office Buildings, Alleppey.
2. District Industries Office Buildings, Malappuram.
3. District Industries Office Buildings, Cannanore.

KERALA STATE HOUSING BOARD

The Kerala State Housing Board helps you to own a house with amenities on hire purchase basis. Register with the Kerala State Housing Board for a house as and when public housing schemes of the Board are announced.

For details of schemes taken up and proposed in

Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey Districts	Contact	Regional Engineer Trivandrum Housing Unit Trivandrum (Phones 5001, 5177)
Kottayam, Idukki, Trichur and Ernakulam Districts	„	Regional Engineer Cochin Housing Unit Pallimukku, Cochin-16 (Phone 32052)
Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palghat and Cannanore Districts	„	Regional Engineer Calicut Housing Unit Cherootty Road, Calicut. (Phone 72165)



VAIDYARATNAM P.S. VARIER'S
ARYA VAIDYA SALA

Pioneers in Ayurveda
KOTTAKKAL.
(Kerala State) Estd. 1902.

Phones : Head Office 31, Nursing Home 44, Chief Physician 25, Managing Trustee 61 (Office) 27 (Residence)

Branches at :

Madras (Phone: 666226), Kozhikode (72155), Palghat (3104), Erode (3172), Tirur (231), Ernakulam (33026), Alwaye (549) and Trivandrum (62349) and over 150 authorized Agencies and Depots.

Genuine standard Ayurvedic medicines and expert medical advice are available at the Head Office at Kottakkal and all Branches, Depots and Agencies. Medical advice through correspondence is given by the Chief Physician at Kottakkal.

Special treatments like Pizhichil, Navarakkizhi etc., are conducted under the supervision of the Chief Physician at the Golden Jubilee Nursing Home, Kottakkal. Please reserve your rooms in advance and come only after getting confirmation.

Persons desiring to consult the Chief Physician are requested to come only after fixing an appointment in advance.

MANAGING TRUSTEE

With best compliments

from

TRAVANCORE TITANIUM PRODUCTS LIMITED

Kochu Veli, Trivandrum 7

H A N T E X

Every One Chooses, Every One Uses

**“HANTEX”
HANDLOOM FABRICS**

Fine Quality : Fancy Designs : Fast Colours : Fair Price

Manufacturers & Exporters of Handloom Dhothies,
Lungies, Bedspreads, Furnishings, Towels, Etc : Etc :

Sales Units - All over Kerala

**The Kerala State Handloom Weavers’
Co-operative Society Ltd.**

Trivandrum

Phone : 60797

Telegram : “HANDLOOMS”

LIVE IN COMFORT

Let That be Your Motto

If you cannot afford it every day why not let go at least once in a way during your annual leave or long weekends?
For assistance in planning tours, accommodation at

THEKKADY
MALAMPUZHA
GURUVAYOOR
TRIVANDRUM

Contact

Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.,
Mascot Hotel Bldgs.,
TRIVANDRUM.

OUR BEST WISHES TO SOCIAL SCIENTIST

Grams : "SIMCOWORKS".

Phones : 8 & 132

SOUTH INDIA METAL COMPANY

Manufacturers of Agricultural Implements, Estate Tools etc.

Iron Foundres and Spare Parts Specialists

SHORANUR 679 122, KERALA.

READERS!

HAVE YOU A BACK NUMBER TO SPARE?

WE ARE GETTING AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ORDERS FOR BACK ISSUES OF THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST FROM RESEARCHERS, AND LIBRARIES IN INDIA AND ABROAD WHICH WANT COMPLETE VOLUMES STARTING WITH THE FIRST.

MANY OF OUR MORE RECENT ISSUES ARE SOLD OUT. EXORBITANT PAPER AND PRODUCTION COSTS FORBID US FROM GETTING THEM REPRINTED AS WE ACTUALLY DID FOR VOLUME ONE.

PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP US TO COPE WITH THIS DEMAND. FROM SHELVES AND STACKS GATHERING DUST, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PULL OUT ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES WE ARE AFTER: SOCIAL SCIENTIST NUMBERS 15, 16, 17, 18-19, 20, 24 and 25.

WE ARE READY TO BUY BACK AT HALF PRICE AND BEAR ALL THE POSTAGE CHARGES.

**Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-I.**

ANNUAL SPECIAL NUMBER

OF

Social Scientist

In August this year, when this journal passes the landmark of its third year of publication, it is proposed to bring out another thematic number. The articles will deal with various facets of the

NATIONAL QUESTION IN INDIA:

It is hoped to give full coverage to all the states and territories. Intending contributors should write immediately to the editor.

Agents now get an opportunity to collect orders and book their additional requirements in advance.

No medium would be more suitable for advertisers.

For further information please write to:

**Business Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1
K e r a l a**

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER 1974
Developing countries in the international division of labour: *V A Gaitonde*; Bengali intelligentsia and the politics of rent, 1873-1885: *Kalyan Kumar Sen Gupta*; Democracy versus totalitarianism: *G V Rao*; Marxism and India: *Ajit Roy*; Notes on Sikkim; Democratizing higher education.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 OCTOBER 1974
Indian ocean and Japan in US grand strategy: *Michael Klare*; Concept of tradition in Indian sociological thought: *H C Srivastava*; State and religion in the Chola empire: *N Vana-mamalai*; Irula folklore: *R Perialwar*; Adivasi oppression in Maharashtra: *Sharad Patil*; Communication on Marxism and Christianity; Appeal to all progressive writers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 NOVEMBER 1974
World capitalist crisis: *B T Ranadive*; Three misconceptions about the state: *Arvind N Das*; Attitudes to political parties: *Sheo Nath Singh*; Notes on: Indian industrial policy and economic power concentration; Signposts to new education.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 5 DECEMBER 1974
Inflation, stagnation and an alternative approach to planning: *Suhas Chattopadhyay*; Early South Indian society and economy - The Tinai concept: *K Sivathamby*; Report on economic crisis and the fifth five year plan; Notes on: Theory of convergence; Secondary school teachers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6/7 JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 1975. Current crisis, planning and growth: *Ashok Mitra*; Current inflation in India: *Prabhat Patnaik*; Fiscal policies and inflation: *M J K Thavaraj*; Distributional effects of inflation: *R Radhakrishna* and *Atul Sarma*; State intervention and foodgrain prices: *N Krishnaji*; A world without inflation: *E.M.S Namboodiripad*; Notes on: Development studies in Sri Lanka; Parliamentary process.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 8 MARCH 1975
Sociology and sociological radicalism: *S C Varma*; Colonialization of the Indian economy, 1757-1900: *Irfan Habib*; Class character of the Indian Constitution: *Hari Chand*; Theories of state, Aristotle to Marx: *Arvind N Das*.

Social Scientist

MAY

975

34

Politics of Psychoanalysis □ Political Economy
of Food □ Herostone Worship in Ancient
South India □ Student Movement at Jawaharlal
Nehru University □ Transnational Monopolies
□ ICSSR Survey of Research in Psychology

Social Scientist

Editor
Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor
Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation
SOCIAL SCIENTIST
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11
Air Mail : Annual \$ 17

(In Pound Sterling)

Sea Mail : Annual £ 4.50
Air Mail : Annual £ 6.00

Single Copy Rs 3

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 3 MAY
NUMBER 10 1975

CONTENTS

S C Varma	3	Politics of Psychoanalysis
Kumaresh Chakravarty	17	Political Economy of Food
N Vanamamalai	40	Herostone Worship in Ancient South India

REPORT

Prakash Karat	47	Student Movement at Jawahar- lal Nehru University
----------------------	----	--

NOTE

G V Rao	55	Transnational Monopolies
----------------	----	--------------------------

BOOK REVIEW

K G Agrawal	69	Survey of Research in Psycho- logy
--------------------	----	---------------------------------------

Articles, report, note and book review express the views of their authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr K G AGRAWAL is fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla.

KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY is in the Department of Bengali, Delhi College, University of Delhi.

PRAKASH KARAT is research scholar at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and president of the Students' Federation of India.

G V RAO is an economic analyst from Goa.

Dr S C VARMA teaches sociology at Lucknow University.

N VANAMAMALAI is editor, AARAICHI, Tamil quarterly journal, Tirunelveli.

FROM THE EDITOR

SOCIAL SCIENTIST breaks new ground this month with two features which pertain to psychology, an important branch of contemporary social science. It is as good an occasion as any to ask authors to send us articles, research papers and notes, reports on current affairs, communications on articles published and book reviews. All manuscripts should be typewritten with wide margins and double spacing. Authors are responsible for checking all quotations and supplying complete references.

We shall reserve the right to make alterations with a view to making the presentation clear and brief. However, where alterations or deletions involve matters of substance, authors will be consulted.

S C VARMA

Politics of Psychoanalysis

THE QUESTION is: why, not how, are mental or personality disorders and a number of other things, as we shall presently see, traced to early childhood emotional experiences of the individual, particularly the parent-child relationship? The answer lies in the politics of psychoanalysis, which is the central concern of this article. That there are no "pure", that is, value-free or politically neutral ideas and theories, is now a well-recognized fact.

The so called 'traditional' social theory (to call it 'traditional' is really to camouflage its aristocratic-feudal ruling class character and make it look venerable) had for ages diverted attention from the concrete social order. This it did by indoctrinating or brainwashing the oppressed classes the world over into ascribing their misery (both material and 'mental') on the one hand and the comforts of the ruling classes on the other to God, fate or previous life. In fact, the given social order was itself declared to be 'natural' or divinely ordained, be it the caste system in India (Manu) or slavery in Europe (Aristotle). This, and the ruling classes' dubious and deceitful promise of unlimited honey and happiness to the oppressed classes in heaven or next life on condition that they lived faithfully according to the *dharma* (predetermined) of their 'station' (predetermined) in this one, in fact made the social-political order inviolable, at least in theory.

Karl Marx gave this absolutely statusquoist theory or ideology—which, as history shows, had certainly never carried complete conviction with the oppressed classes—the severest blow. To be precise, extricating human thought from the quagmire of theism, idealism and metaphysics, Marx urged upon the social scientists to exercise what C Wright Mills rather loosely calls “the sociological imagination”: widespread problems, ranging from injustice, poverty and unemployment to crime, drug addiction, suicide and mental disorders, are to be attributed not to God and fate or to individual factors but to the social (to be precise, economic-political) structure; and the social structure is itself to be treated purely as a historical-human construct. Evidently, this was too dangerous an approach for the new bourgeois ruling class to tolerate, much less support.

The ruling bourgeoisie had, therefore, to do something about it. Someone had to blur this revolutionary Marxian social perspective (of blaming the social order, even for apparently individual mishaps or misfortune) but without bringing God or fate in, certainly not through the front door. And the man who attempted this blurring and did it most audaciously, ingeniously, systematically, seductively and Godlessly, was Sigmund Freud.

Marx and Freud, Poles Apart

Both Marx and Freud, as Erich Fromm (*Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud*, 1962) points out, went to the roots; that is, both doubted the apparent and did the unmasking, adopting a dialectical approach and stressing the liberating function of “truth”. The point is well taken, but not much should be made of it. For Marx uncovered ‘interests’, while Freud thought of ‘motives’, the difference being that while ‘interests’ are directly knowable for being determined by the objective social entity of class (relations to means of production), Freudian ‘motives’ can only be guessed or speculated, allegedly rooted as they are in the directly unknowable “id” and the “unconscious.” In any case, Marx, unlike Freud, went beyond the psychology of interests and thereby made the crucial move from the particular conception of ideology to its total conception to found the modern Sociology of Knowledge (which in the USA has given up the historical perspective and has degenerated into communication research). While for Marx “truth” is basically historical-social, for Freud it is essentially timeless and personal. Hence, whereas Marx adopted a strictly historical perspective on man and society, Freud fostered (subversively) a totally a-historical and anti-historical *bio-graphic* mode of analysis (because of his biologism). The methodological similarity between Marx and Freud stressed by Fromm is thus very limited on significant counts and contrary to Fromm’s opinion Freud, unlike Marx, turns out to be a pseudo-radical.

No amount of methodological similarity (real or imputed) can obscure this, for the thing that really and ultimately counts is the conclusions drawn, not methodology. And there is no doubt that Marx and

Freud differed fundamentally; in fact, the two are poles apart. Briefly, Marx did not accept the very idea of a fixed, pre-social universal human nature, certainly not of "the territorial imperative" and "the social contract" of "the naked ape" "on aggression" in "the human zoo" kind, which, though currently very fashionable in certain ethological and social anthropological (and Nobel prize-giving) quarters, is but an apology for the inhumanity of the capitalist-imperialist system and quite unscientific (M F Ashley Montagu (Ed.) *Man and Aggression*, 1969); but Freud started precisely with a fixed conception of man and human nature, again because of his biologism. Hence whereas Marxian man is full of potentialities and is bound to fully realize them, finally overcoming the dehumanizing material conditions on this very earth, that is, whereas Marxian man joyously and triumphantly emerges as the maker and master of himself and of his history, Freudian man is an hopelessly lost 'case', eternally doomed to painfully live out his tangled, torturous and tragic inner Oedipal destiny. I therefore reject Lionel Trilling's contention (*Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture*, 1955) that Freud's biologism is not a reactionary but a "liberating idea" as utterly mistaken. Also to be noted is the fact that Freud advanced an absurd, criminal conception of man, the fictional primeval parricide in fact being the secular substitute of the Biblical "original sin" myth.

Dialectic, Social and Psychological

Then, while Marx advanced the social dialectic of classes, Freud propounded the psychological, inner dialectic of id *vs.* ego and Eros *vs.* Thanatos. The reason is that while for Marx the basic reality was the economic-social structure (material conditions of existence), for Freud it was the individual's libidinal 'development' and psychic organization. To be sure, Marx did not omit the individual and self-change; but he thought of the individual not as an abstraction but in terms of "practical activity" (productive, that is, human-social activity which constitutes human existence) and of self-change as a matter of changing of objective material conditions and social relations, that is, the individual changes himself by and through changing the circumstances, and "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing", says Marx, "can only be grasped and rationally understood as revolutionary practice." As opposed to this, Freud viewed the individual as a mere bundle of certain innate, unalterable tendencies or drives and regarded self-change as the introspective process (initiated by a psychoanalyst) of untying the emotional tangles caused by the repression (inevitable for Freud but not for Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, 1955) of these impulses. Hence, as opposed to Marxism, which calls for the restructuring of society through collective revolutionary political action, Freud's thought system (the entire psychoanalytic school, in fact, as we shall shortly see) centres on the individual and stresses the correction of the individual's mental make-up through psychoanalysis. Bluntly put,

Freud had no sociological imagination: Freud's so called social theory began with the (fictional) primeval horde and, rigorously speaking, ended with the primeval horde, his *The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism* notwithstanding.

Finally, Marx did not at all think in *patho*-logical terms—not even of alienation, which he viewed not as an individual, mental or spiritual aberration or condition like Hegel but as an historical, social phenomenon “a fact of political economy” or “alienated labour” and, therefore, treated communism as *the* historical and rational way to overcome it. But Freud (who, incidentally, did not mention alienation but which has been highlighted by some other psychoanalysts like Frederick A Weiss and Paul Schilder though not in Marxian but existentialist sense of the term) concentrated on individual *pathology* (which is why Jung treats much of the Freudian psychology as inadequate and useless though Jung's psychology is even more mystifying and mythical); not only this: Freud even regarded individual pathology as the source of social pathology. And this was exactly the kind of diversionary intellectual move the ruling bourgeoisie had needed in its struggle against Marxism. Reversing Marx, Freud sought to undermine the Marxian call to arms through his call to the couch.

Focus on Family

Freud therefore inevitably and deliberately diverted our attention from the social structure and focused it on but a unit of it, namely the family. There is, he implied (*Civilization and Its Discontents* notwithstanding), nothing wrong (in the Marxian sense) with the whole social set-up; with the totality of objective material conditions of existence itself: the villain of the piece is the family, especially the father (Freud took the patriarchal family as his model); and all individual behaviour, be it drunkenness or radicalism, is to be explained in terms of early childhood experiences in the family circle, particularly the parent-child relationship. Thus if one turned a drug-addict or a delinquent, the mother was to blame for either giving too much love or too little of it; if one became a radical political activist, it was the result of the innate antagonism towards the father or father figure; for example, L Feuer (*The Conflict of Generations*, 1969) views student protest as a manifestation of Oedipal conflict! This too suited the interests of the ruling bourgeois class admirably well. For historical social forces and conditions were declared to be of no consequence: things to be studied and taken seriously were sexual tactics and tangles, patricidal and incestuous tendencies, infantile sexuality, anal and oral fixations, penis envy and castration fear, return-to-the-womb urge and or birth trauma, sibling rivalry, child rearing practices, breast vs. bottle and toilet training. And not class but the individual's underworld, that is the unconscious “hinterland of consciousness”, as D H Lawrence calls it, held the clues to one's attitudes, beliefs and behaviour pattern.¹

This then is the basic psychoanalytic frame, which started the nefarious but highly-paying practice of bugging homes, peeping into

bedrooms and toilets, washing dirty linen in public, and scandalizing the childhood. The practice, it must be noted, is however by no means confined to the psychoanalysts but frightfully widespread among the social scientists, philosophers, creative writers and students of the humanities. But my main concern here is the result of this psychoanalytic voyeurism—this psychoanalytic Watergating—for politics and politicians; both have been made to look anything but politic; in fact, psychoanalysis has painted them as diseased, irrational, *non compos mentis*.

It is said that no man is a hero to his valet (add the confessor) but in private. But no man is a hero to his psychoanalyst even in public, for the psychoanalyst, unlike the proverbial valet (and the confessor), ardently does 'analyse', write and publish. This has of course very justly undermined the notorious romantic "hero" theory of history, but in an utterly incorrect and anti-Marxist manner and, paradoxically, by indirectly making the 'hero' even more personally fascinating or sensational by showing him to be evil or sinister, or libidinally abnormal, deviant or vile. Hence for psychoanalysis every leader of men and minds, be it Luther³ or Kafka,⁸ Lenin⁴, Mao⁵ or Gandhi⁶, Hitler⁷, J F Kennedy⁸ or Richard Nixon⁹, is primarily a case for the couch, though in varying degrees.

Freudian Interpretation of Politics

To be precise, Freud with his *Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psycho-sexuality* started the bizarre but titillating (to the jaded 'middle class' middle-aged persons) fashion of searching the clues to the character, ideas and actions of public figures not in their historical circumstances and in social forces but in their early childhood experiences in the home and they pompously call it "psychohistory"! Thus, for example, Hitler "raped" Czechoslovakia and "erected" Buchenwald and Auschwitz (the verbs are singularly appropriate to the occasion) because of his "perversion" and "paranoia" and failure to integrate and sublimate his "aggressive-sadistic drives into normal erotic aggression" on account of "the repression of his psycho-sexual development"! Or Kennedy attacked Cuba because he was a case of "neurosis" (generated by an overdemanding father) and "emotional fixation on Castro" (who was "Kennedy's *alter ego*: the bold leader Kennedy longed to be but could not bring himself to become") and Nixon has devastated Indochina because of his "oral" character!

It is the same with political ideologies and mentalities, be it religion, nazism, antisemitism and white racism or be it communism. These too are (absurdly) said to be born not of particular historical-social formations and forces but character traits of a whole people (or groups of people)—traits allegedly primarily shaped by parent-child interaction in its bearing on certain innate drives, particularly libidinal but also drive for power (Adler). Thus, for example, religion is a neurosis (for Freud, and its cure for Jung¹⁰) and ethics is "applied psychology", primarily concerned with the "problem of irrational hate", which is "rooted in personal character"

(Fromm¹¹); that is, psychoanalysis seeks to hide or obscure the fact that, as Marx has shown, religion is a tool of class exploitation and ethics is but an instrument and rationalization of specific class interests. Similarly, nazism is a matter of "sadistic craving for power" and "masochistic longing for submission" (Fromm¹²) or of "authoritarian personality" (Adorno¹³); fascism is rooted in "the human soul, *not in economics*" (Mumford¹⁴), or in "irrational mysticism of male homosexual love", that is, it is "an overvaluation of masculinity . . . an over-compensation for fear of impotence", an "escape from woman" (Nathan¹⁵); antisemitism (and racism generally) signifies "idolatory" (Kalsey¹⁶) or "sadistic attraction to the Jew" and "fear of man's fate" (Sartre¹⁷); and finally, communism is rooted in neurotic "persecutory anxiety" (Franz Newmann¹⁸), "alienating feelings" (hostility, neurotic isolation, self rejection) born of serious deprivations and frustrations in early life (Almond¹⁹), or "envy" or some such sentiment! No wonder, with some psychoanalytically-oriented political theorists and politically-oriented psychoanalysts, the Yenan period of the Maoist Revolution in China has become the "Yenan Syndrome" and "Yenan Complex"!

Social Role of Psychotherapy

The implication is clear: all ideologies, from the strictly Freudian angle, are atavistic, regressive, allegedly rooted as they are in psychological hang-ups or personality distortions caused primarily by parental repression in childhood and by parental attitudes, presumably shaped by parents' parents, whose attitudes in turn were shaped by *their* parents—and so on till one reaches back to Adam and Eve (and to the apple, which might keep the doctor away but not the psychoanalyst). As such, there is nothing much to choose between different ideologies (and leaders, who are but 'father figures' and mass identification with whom, according to Lifton,²⁰ is a new form of filial piety, or, as Newmann would have it, a "substitute for a libidinal object tie"); and all politics are unhealthy and undesirable, dispensable! There is however one very interesting exception: as both the rightists and leftists are said to be motivated by "neurotic needs", the (so called) 'centrists' or liberals are to be seen as the only 'sane' and sensible elements in our 'crazy' world of politics—no one has yet discovered any psychological hang-up in *them*, but we know better: the so-called liberals are basically rightists or reactionaries with a mask of left radicalism; or, to put it in psychoanalytical terms, they are the most pathetic cases of Freudian "ambivalence" of what may be called the 'fear of commitment'.

It is in terms of this eerie erotica of politics which psychoanalysis presents to divert us from the economics and sociology of politics—and all in the name of science—that the social role or politics of psychotherapy²¹ can be best understood. I frankly do not know what psychoanalysis actually does or wants to achieve by way of so called 'cure'. There are three reasons for this. First, it is by no means definite as to *what* is to be cured,

that is, what constitutes mental illness or disorder, because 'mental health' is yet to be precisely and objectively defined²² (definitions which, for example, stress 'happiness' are obviously too vague or loose to be of any practical use and definitions which stress 'adjustment' are patently value-laden); besides, there is no generally accepted etiology of whatever constitutes mental illness. Secondly, there is no universally accepted stance on specific mental 'disorders'; that is, what may be viewed as 'disorder' or 'illness' by some psychiatrists may not be so viewed by others: for example, Laing,²³ unlike many psychotherapists, regards schizophrenia not as a breakdown but as a "break-through"—a "voyage"—and, therefore, hails the schizophrenic as a potential prophet! Thirdly, the dividing line between 'normal' and 'abnormal' is in any case openly accepted to be very thin, which means either all of us are sick and abnormal and the difference is but one of degree, or sickness is the 'normal' state or condition of man—in which case psychotherapy is attempting a task which is either impossible or pointless, or both.

'Sublimation' of Political Activism

But one thing is perfectly clear: its fundamentally diversionary and reactionary conceptual or ideological framework stated earlier, could not but render psychotherapy utterly reactionary and statusquoist. Firstly, most psychotherapists are ill-equipped to see the social structural roots or sources of mental disturbances; and secondly, being the beneficiaries and accomplices of the dehumanizing capitalist system (every system begets the therapists it needs), these sophisticated merchants of social escapism perpetuate the oppression of the victims of the bourgeois order (specially women²⁴) through further blunting and falsifying their social awareness: psychoanalysis is the modern, secular bourgeois opiate of the masses. Then, the so-called expert and 'scientific' medical opinion is in essence a prescription of bourgeois values and political judgments, which define health as adjustment and lack of adjustment or active protest as a malady requiring an expansive and endless treatment (though it must be noted that not every type of lack of adjustment or style of protest is of Marxian revolutionary significance, for example, the Hippie variety). To cite Stokely Carmichael's vivid illustration, if a man is holding a gun on another man (both are white) for no apparent reason, perhaps just to rob him or shoot him because he did not like him, then the liberal (psychologist), instead of getting a gun and shooting the gunman or actively joining forces with his victim, would walk around the oppressor and come to the victim and say "Can I help you?", which, says Carmichael, means "help you to adjust to the situation with the man who has the gun on you."²⁵ In any case, the individual introspective therapy prescribes individual solutions to collective problems, to what is basically a matter of social structure and its supporting social ethic or conscience collective. This is not so much to deny the fact of psychic disorders (though I feel tempted to²⁶) as their psychoanalytical explanations, chiefly Freudian, but also neo-Freudian.

Above all, psychotherapy, in spite of its basic therapeutic postulate that "truth" (self-awareness) liberates, does not lead to but obstructs revolutionary political action. The reason for this failure lies in the sex-centrism of psychoanalysis, in the fact that for psychoanalysis (to borrow a line from Philip Hobsbaum's poem "A Lesson in Love") "Truth lies between your legs, and so do I". (Sex is perhaps the most potent diversion, which explains the current influx of sex literature in the market and of market sex in literature, and movies, in all bourgeois countries.) Thus, for example, Shulamith Firestone (*The Dialectic of Sex*, 1970) talks of "sexual class system" and declares that as all social-economic oppression originates from biological (sexual) oppression, all liberation must *begin* with sexual liberation! And so Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970) and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1971) have become more important than Marx's *Capital*, and *Screw* magazine has become more relevant than the *Communist Manifesto*! Indeed, the ruling ideas, as Marx perceptively observes, are the ideas of the ruling class. Nothing would suit the ruling interests of the advanced decadent bourgeoisie more than people ardently discussing the sexual practices of the (American) male, the female orgasm, anxiously researching sexual inadequacy, madly fighting for and against phallic arrogance, 'gayly' agitating for 'freedom' to homosexuality, and desperately seeking solutions to the inherent hollowness and ennui of their bourgeois existence in mate-swapping.

I am not here questioning the necessity and importance of changing the 'traditional' exploitative and oppressive patriarchal mores governing the sex roles: woman certainly did not begin with mending socks by the fireplace, so to say; that came later. But I do maintain that this counter-culture thesis²⁷ (which absurdly views culture as autonomous) that the capitalist system can be overthrown through changing love-making positions or postures in the bedroom (or on the beach) denotes a misunderstanding and distortion of Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Indeed, the Marxist revolutionaries do violate parental authority, but not for Freudian reasons but because in a class society (i) the parental authority is but an extension not of societal authority but of the authority of the ruling class and (ii) the family restricts one's breadth of commitment. And though revolution is total, indivisible, it is first and fundamentally political (seizure of state power) and cultural afterwards. But this is going beyond the scope of this article.

Childhood Socialization into What?

Bluntly put, psychoanalysis is conceptually surrealist, mythical and obscurantist, therapeutically dreamy, deceptive and exploitative (the latest is Martin Shepard's 'radical' prescription of sexual intimacy between the therapist and his patients as a therapeutic stratagem, particularly in cases of lesbianism and female frigidity!²⁸) and politically diversionary and anti-revolutionary. I therefore find most books done in a psychoanalytical frame appalling and objectionable (Freudian 'resistance?'), whatever be

their 'technical' merit which, I think, is the headache of those who regard the so called 'technical' merit as the sole and basic criterion of evaluating books, researches and theories and want us to be, as Alvin Gouldner puts it, "moral cretins in our technical roles". And the psychoanalytical literature on the childhood is no exception, for most child psychoanalysts simply refuse to get out of the Freudian trap, agonizing over the "psychological mechanisms" involved in 'bad' effects of 'bad' child care.

This is not to say that child psychology and child care are unimportant; they are not, and children are important to both the statusquoists and the revolutionaries from the educational, that is ideological training, point of view. The point is that no amount of good child care in the most doting of families can immunize or even protect the child against the dehumanizing impact of bourgeois economic-social order and cultural ethos born of it, not even during the childhood, to say nothing of adult life. In fact, there cannot be a healthy child upbringing in an exploitative and decadent class society: I have, on the one hand, known poor parents mercilessly beating up their ten-year-old-child for returning empty handed from the ration shop after having stood in the long Hobbesian queue at it since 4 A M in winter and, on the other, affluent parents letting their children live the "Playboy philosophy" from an early age. Thus, as Paul Goodman points out, the whole process of growing up in such a society is one of "growing up absurd."²⁹ And there is little that the family can do about it. For the family is a dependent variable in that it is but an *agency* (of the wider social order), which does not itself determine the content of child upbringing; and methods or practices of child upbringing are but a mechanism of transmission and, therefore, cannot explain one's personality and psychic make-up, which is determined by the content of transmission (values, beliefs, norms and so on). "Socialization into what?" is the central question. But psychoanalysis diverts our attention precisely from this question, because it leads us to the basic issue of the economic-political structure.

Radical Shift

It is true that some psychoanalysts have developed the sociological imagination, specially in the post-World War II period. Further, the so called radical therapists like Rick Kunes are urging that the correct thing to do is to enable the 'patients' to grasp the "political causes" of their "symptoms" and to work with political organizations; and Frantz Fanon (like Sartre who stresses the "curative role" of anti-colonial violence in the native's "colonial neurosis", unlike Marx for whom revolutionaries' violence is but a social structural and strategic necessity) romantically recommends revolutionary violence as a "cleansing force" at the individuals' psychic level.³⁰ This shift has occurred chiefly through Eric Fromm, Karen Horney, Wilhelm Reich, Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse and R D Laing, to name but a few. These have raised the issue of social structure and/or culture in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy³¹

though in varying degrees of boldness, directness and clarity—and for different ends: for example, while Fromm, Marcuse and Sartre have urged the restructuring of capitalist and what the so-called going-beyond-Marx ‘convergence’ set mystifyingly calls the “post industrial”^{3,2} society on apparently radical lines, Laing, perhaps taking Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents* to its logical conclusion, has demanded the de-civilization of man! The shift, it must be noted, has been compelled by the deepening crisis of the US-dominated world capitalist system, caused primarily by the system’s internal logic and the anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World.

But a careful examination of the issue reveals that this so-called radicalization of psychoanalysis is more apparent and rhetorical than real. For, firstly, even with these so called ‘social’ psychoanalysts and ‘social’ psychiatrists the approach fundamentally remains *psycho*-analytical in that the whole society and/or culture is subjected to psychoanalysis. Thus, for example, Abram Kardiner and Cora Dubois have traced some institutions of the Alor people to their emotional constriction and childhood feeding frustrations resulting from maternal neglect,^{3,3} while Erik Erikson^{3,4} stressing the characterological-cognitive implications of the alimentary experiences of the mouth and the anus (namely, injective, retentive and evacuatory), has traced some institutions of the Sioux to hostility towards the mother (and accompanying guilt) born of their prolonged nursing period! Not only this, the ills of the social order are still attributed to psycho-biological factors. For example, Reich^{3,5} maintains that political systems are repressive because people are not *psychologically* liberated and that this liberation—elimination of “libidostatis”—is a matter of massive release of psychic tensions through orgasm (“organotherapy” is what he calls it).

Absurdly Hopeless Enterprise

Secondly, the family continues to be the basic and critical unit in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy—this, even when primacy is given not to Freudian libidinal fixations but to “communication pattern”, “interpersonal relationships” (H S Sullivan) and “experience” (Laing talks of “schizophrenic families”). Finally, the therapeutic strategy fundamentally remains superstructuralist in that it is consciousness-oriented, that is, it is idealistic, inward-looking and subjectivist, which is even more true of the existentialist psychoanalysis.^{3,6} And this is precisely the reason why psychotherapy, in both its Freudian and neo-Freudian varieties, shall ever remain a wild goose chase;^{3,7} if any thing, the psychoanalysts’ and psychiatrists’ recent recognition of the role of social-cultural (or of somatic) factors in ‘mental’ and ‘personality’ disorders doubly underlines, on the one hand, the futility and unprofitability (to the ‘patient’, I mean) of *psycho*-therapy and, on the other, the need for fundamental social change.

It is therefore pointless to enthuse over the so called radical psychoanalysis, whatever its departures from Freud (starting with the Master’s first disciples Jung, Adler and Rank in his own life time) and Marxist

pretensions be.³⁸ In fact, I question the very validity and legitimacy of this whole attempt to 'synthesize' psychoanalysis (and existentialism) with Marxism by injecting Marxism into psychoanalysis (Fromm, Reich) or psychoanalysis into Marxism (Sartre, Marcuse). The attempt ostensibly wants to do two things: make psychoanalysis socially relevant or useful and 'humanize' Marxism. But, firstly, while the first task is utterly impossible on account of the basic conceptual and therapeutic framework of psychoanalysis itself, the second is utterly superfluous, for Marxism, as noted earlier, *is* humanism par excellence; and secondly, the attempt not only mystifies the sociological concept of alienation given by Marx (after de-mystifying its Hegelian concept) but, in fact, dilutes and defrauds the whole Marxian revolutionary analytic and action frame. This it does in two ways: by tearing Marx's ideas out of their capitalist context and turning them into sheer abstractions, and, secondly, by viewing social structure, culture and values³⁹ as autonomous (of their economic foundations), that is, in idealistic, non-historical, non-materialist and non-(dichotomous) class terms.

The Answer

The fundamental, real and vital problems are not those mythical libidinal hang-ups, castration fear, sibling rivalry, identity search and *nirvana* but class exploitation and oppression, economic-social injustice, discrimination and deprivation, racism, imperialism and neo-colonialism, and poverty, unemployment, hunger and destitution. These, evidently, are not individual but social problems or issues; also, these are rooted neither "in the minds of men" nor yet in the home but in particular (to be precise, private property-based) economic-political systems which, it must be noted, are objective and historical and not mental phenomena or their aspects, reflections or derivatives.⁴⁰ As such, these basic human problems cannot be solved through mother love, sex counselling and toilet training; the answer, that is to say, is not psychoanalysis and psychotherapy —the diversionary and statusquoist ideology of the ruling bourgeois class — but Marxist revolution.

¹ Freud is perhaps the most popularized thinker, chiefly because of his anti-Marxism and concern with sex. It is therefore not easy to separate technically sound books on Freud from the unsound ones. However, for a competent overview of Freudian and neo-Freudian theories (and bibliography thereon) see Albert William Levi, *Philosophy and the Modern World*, Indiana University Press, 1959 (Ch V) and Floyd W Matson, *The Broken Image: Man, Science and Society*, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1966 (Ch VI). See also Manorama Savur, *Freud on Man and Society*, Popular Prakashan, 1965.

² Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, Norton, 1958.

³ Anthony Storr, *The Dynamics of Creation*, Atheneum, 1972.

⁴ E Victor Wolfenstein, *The Revolutionary Personality*, Princeton University Press, 1967.

⁵ Robert Jay Lifton, *Revolutionary Immortality: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968. See also Richard H Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture*, University of California Press, 1971.

The only intelligent, valid and acceptable thing Lifton says in his book is his opening

statement: "We do well to recognize our ignorance of China"—it is in the light of this that his idiotic anxiety-of-death explanation of the Cultural Revolution must be seen. But what is really involved here is not Lifton's admitted ignorance of China but his unadmitted ignorance (or is it knowing rejection?) of Marxism-Leninism (he does mention "conceptual" ignorance but it refers to something else). As for Solomon, he is no less ignorant than Lifton in both these matters; he is only more brazen in his Freudian attribution of Mao's revolutionary politics to his and his countrymen's 'anxiety' about aggression and conflict and 'ambivalence towards authority', born of their childhood 'socialization' pattern and experiences!

It is also interesting to note that both Lifton and Solomon (and the like) have been helped in overcoming their ignorance of China and of the Maoist revolution chiefly by the Hong Kong and US-Taiwan based 'Chinese', American tourists (for whom the most remarkable thing about the People's Republic of China is the absence of flies in Peking), and the Ford Foundation-CIA-Pentagon-State Department and (now) Moscow financed and sustained multinational, myopic China Watchers, Inc.

- ⁶ Erik Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth: On Origins of Militant Non-violence*, Faber and Faber, 1970.
- ⁷ Gustav Bychowski, *Dictators and Disciples: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History*, International University Press, 1948 and Walter C Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*, Basic Books, 1972.
Incidentally, Hitler and Freud made fiercely antagonistic contemporaries, but both were one in their opposition to rationalism and Marxism; and interestingly enough, both Marx and Freud were forced to leave their homeland for political reasons, and both finally settled and died in London.
For a brief account of the influence of the social situation of Vienna of their early years on Hitler and Freud, see Jeffrey Meyers, "Freud, Hitler and Vienna," in *London Magazine*, August/September 1974.
- ⁸ Nancy Gager Clinch, *The Kennedy Neurosis: A Psychological Portrait of an American Dynasty*, Grosset and Dunlap, 1973.
- ⁹ Bruce Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon: A Psychohistorical Inquiry*, Basic Books, 1972.
- ¹⁰ On Jung, see Ira Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, Grove Press, 1955 V S de Laszlo (Ed.), *The Basic Writings of C G Jung*, Modern Library, 1959, and Edward Glover, *Freud or Jung?* Norton, 1950.
- ¹¹ Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*, Rinehart, 1947. See also L S Feurer, *Psychoanalysis and Ethics*, Springfield, Ill., 1955.
- ¹² Erich Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, Kegan Paul, 1942.
- ¹³ Theodor Adorno, *et al*, *The Authoritarian Personality*, Harper, 1950.
- ¹⁴ L Mumford, *Faith for Living*, Secker & Warburg, 1941.
- ¹⁵ Peter Nathan, *The Psychology of Fascism*, Faber and Faber; see also Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Orgone Institute Press, 1946.
- ¹⁶ George D Kelsey, 'Racism as Idolatry', in A K Bierman and James A Gould (Eds.), *Philosophy for New Generation*, Macmillan, 1970.
- ¹⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, "Portrait of the Antisemite", in Walter Kaufmann (Ed.), *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, Meridian Books, 1959.
- ¹⁸ Franz Newmann, "Anxiety and Politics," in Eric and Mary Josephson (Eds.), *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society*, Dell, 1962.
- ¹⁹ Gabriel A Almond, *The Appeal of Communism*, Princeton University Press, 1954.
- ²⁰ Robert J Lifton, *Thought Reform and Psychology of Totalism: A Study of 'Brainwashing' in China*, Norton, 1971.
- ²¹ See, for example, Erving Goffman, *Asylums*, Doubleday, 1971; Morton Schatzman, "Madness and Morals", in Robert Boyers and Robert Orrill (Eds.), *Laing and Antipsychiatry*, Penguin Books, 1972; Philip Rief, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*, Doubleday, 1961; Richard T Lapiere, *The Freudian Ethic*, Duell, Sloane and Pearce 1959, and Benjamin Nelson (Ed.), *Freud and the Twentieth Century*, Meridian Books, 1957.

See also Leroy H Rieselbach and George I Balch (Eds.), *Psychology, and Politics*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969.

- ²² See, for example, F D Redlich, "The Concept of Health in Psychiatry", in Alexander H Leighton, John A Clausen and Robert N Wilson (Eds.), *Explorations in Social Psychiatry*, Tavistock, 1957; see also J Jordan, "Who is Mad? Who is Sane?" *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1971.
- ²³ On R D Laing's work, see Robert Boyers and Robert Orrill (Eds.), *Laing and Anti-psychiatry*, Penguin, 1972.
- ²⁴ Phyllis Chesler, "Marriage and Psychotherapy", *International Socialist Review*, November 1970.
- ²⁵ Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power", in David Cooper (Ed.), *The Dialectic of Liberation*, Penguin, 1968.
- ²⁶ See, for example, T Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness*, Hoeber-Harper, 1961.
I guess, incidentally, the biophysicists and biochemists have something significant to say on 'mental' disorders: see, for example, Max Rinkel and Herman C B Denber (Eds.), *Chemical Concepts of Psychosis: Proceedings of the Symposium on Chemical Concepts of Psychosis*, McDowell, Oblensky, 1958.
- ²⁷ Theodore Roszak (*The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*, Faber and Faber, 1968) and Charles A Reich (*The Greening of America*, Random House, 1970) are the two most notable articulators of this counter culture thesis; but while Roszak opposes modern technocracy as such and therefore recommends total dropping out, Reich holds that society will change with the change of Consciousness I (of the conservative) and Consciousness II (of the liberal) to Consciousness III (of the life-style revolutionary). Evidently, both miss or reject the fact that consciousness cannot change society unless it is translated into organized political action directed at the seizure of state power; that is, this counter culture strategy is totally a-political and has, therefore, proved sterile and deceptive.
- ²⁸ Martin Shepard, *The Love Treatment: Sexual Intimacy between Patients and Psychotherapists*, Wyden, 1972.
- ²⁹ Paul Goodman, *Growing up Absurd*, Random House, 1960.
- ³⁰ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, MacGibbon and Kee, 1965.
- ³¹ On 'social' psychiatry see, for example, Alexander H Leighton, John A Clausen and Robert N Wilson (Eds.), *Explorations in Social Psychiatry*, Tavistock, 1957; H S Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry*, William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, Washington 1947; James C Coleman, *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, Scott, Foreman, 1965; Marvin K Opler, *Culture and Mental Health*, Macmillan, 1959; T J Scheff, *Being Mentally Ill: A Sociological Theory*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966; and A B Hollingshead and F C Redlich, *Social Class and Mental Illness*, John Wiley, 1958. See also Brij Mohan, *Social Psychiatry in India: A Treatise on the Mentally Ill*, The Minerva Associates, 1973.
- ³² See, for example, William Kuhns, *The Post-industrial Prophets*, Harper & Row, 1973.
- ³³ See Abram Kardiner *et al*, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, Columbia University Press, 1945; also, A Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society: The Psychodynamics of Primitive Social Organization*, Columbia University Press, 1939.
- ³⁴ Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, Imago, 1951.
There is no dearth of literature on psychoanalytical anthropology (it is a misnomer to call it *social* anthropology), but special mention may be made of Geza Roheim, *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology: Culture, Personality and the Unconscious*, International University Press, 1950. For a critique see Ashley Montagu, *Man in Process*, Mentor Books, 1962, Chapter 23. Bronislaw Malinowski's *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (Harcourt, Brace, 1927) is about the best-known concrete anthropological refutation of the Freudian approach to the study of culture: Malinowski shows that the Oedipus Complex is not universal but a product of a particular type of family structure namely patriarchal, and that the real source of the male child's anti-father feeling

is not the child's alleged sexual jealousy towards the father but the father's power to dominate or authority (that is, social) relations with the child.

³⁵ Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of Orgasm*, Orgone Institute, 1948.

³⁶ For existential psychoanalysis, see Rollo May, *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, Basic Books, 1958; also, Werner Wolff, *Values and Personality: An Existential Psychology of Crisis*, Grune & Stratton, 1950, and Hazel Barnes, *The Literature of Possibility*, University of Nebraska Press, 1959. I think there is nothing 'ontological' about the existentialist 'angst,' 'nausea,' 'fear and trembling' and 'sickness unto death': these simply are feelings caused by the capitalistic life-organization and its social ethic characterized by atomization and dehumanization of man.

Incidentally, the entire present 'stream of consciousness' literature is inspired by existentialism; and all that one has to do to get one's novels, stories or plays hailed as existentialist masterpieces is to stuff them with at least two naked sexual bouts (or a discussion thereof) per page a la Henry Miller (*The Tropic of Cancer*), Alberto Moravia (*Two: A Phallic Novel*) and William Burroughs (*The Naked Lunch*).

³⁷ The anti-Marxist, so called 'traditionalist' scholars also reject modern psychology and psychoanalysis, but without rejecting psychologism as such. Thus, for example, Avasthi dismisses Freudian and neo-Freudian techniques (of resolving tensions) as "pseudomeasures"—only to recommend the "techniques" of an even more mystifying, obscurantist and diversionary "Hindu psychology" (sic) based on absurdities like god, bliss, soul, *maya* etc., firmly maintaining that all tensions (individual, group and international) are rooted in the psyche! See Rajendra Avasthi, *Psyche, Society and Tensions*, The Minerva Associates, 1973.

My criticism against the modern psychoanalysis and psychotherapy therefore applies all the more justly to the so called Hindu (or Christian or Muslim) psychology and its tension-reduction techniques.

³⁸ See Paul A Robinson, *The Freudian Left*, New York, 1966. See also Walter Bromberg, *Man above Humanity: A History of Psychotherapy*, Lippincott, 1954.

³⁹ See, for example, J H Masserman (Ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Human Values*, Grune & Stratton, 1950; R S Hartman, *Psychoanalysis and Moral Values*, International University Press, 1960; and A H Maslow (Ed.), *New Knowledge in Human Values*, Harper, 1959. Maslow is inclined to even define psychotherapy as "a search for values", for "ultimately the search for identity is, in essence, the search for one's own intrinsic authentic values." (?) A H Maslow, *Towards a Psychology of Being*, Van Nostrand, 1962.

See also Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Dimensions of Values: A Unified Theory*, George Allen & Unwin, 1964. Mukerjee is critical of all partial theories (biological, psychological etc) of values; but his own so called 'unified' theory, done as it is in liberalist un-Marxist-materialist (class) terms, turns out to be totally idealistic, abstract and mystifying. Mukerjee does take notice of the Marxist approach to values in *The Dynamics of Morals* (Macmillan, 1950), but only to reject it—and his celebrated attempt to 'synthesize' the 'traditional' metaphysical world-view, Comtean (idealist) positivism, Marxist dialectical materialism and modern theistic existentialism proves abortive for obvious reasons.

⁴⁰ It is imperative to mention Claude Levi-Strauss here. I frankly do not understand him well, but Dagenais's suggestion that Levi-Strauss does not directly derive social structures from inborn and unconscious mental structures but, taking a middle position between Hegel (who derives the world from the mind) and Marx (who derives consciousness from the world), stresses the conjunction, parallelism or congruence between mental and social (and linguistic structures), is highly debatable. See James J Dagenais, *Models of Man: A Phenomenological Critique of Some Paradigms in the Human Sciences*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1972.

KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY

Political Economy of Food

PART ONE

1

PROCUREMENT of kharif crops, particularly paddy, has again been a big failure this year. Earlier hopes of a bumper rabi crop have dimmed, according to A P Shinde, Minister of State for Agriculture. Prices of rice and wheat have remained significantly higher than during last year. In the rice-growing states, prices continued to soar even during harvest season and by late March 1975 began edging up again.

The government is going in for massive American wheat imports, buying at not less than Rs 155 per quintal in the US market. In spite of repeated promises that wheat procurement prices would not be raised beyond last year's level of Rs 105 per quintal, the pressure of wheat-producing states, particularly Punjab and Haryana, led to the announcement of a procurement bonus. Some states introduced a system of 'graded producer levy' on rice, but it operated in some areas and only against the middle and poor peasants, while in some others it has been ultimately withdrawn, in effect. Although procurement price of paddy was fixed at Rs 74 per quintal, newspapers reported bulk purchases by north Indian wholesale traders at Rs 100 or more. Having lowered the target of wheat procurement, the quantity supplied through statutory rationing has been cut in quite a few metropolitan cities. In the 1975-76 railway budget, freight on foodgrains has been increased, though marginally, and in the general

budget an allocation of Rs 295 crores made as subsidy on food. The sum total of all this can only mean, as indicated clearly by the trends, that free market rice prices will vary between a minimum of Rs 3.50 and Rs 5 per kilogram and those of wheat between Rs 2 and Rs 3.50 per kilogram during the lean months of 1975.

While the Finance Minister claims to have presented a budget for arresting inflation, the Prime Minister has been saying recently that the worst of the crisis is over. During and after the Narora Camp of Congress Party leaders, there has been a hypocritical show of concern for the rural poor. Y B Chavan is reported to have said that between the middle and poor peasants, his party will choose the latter for preferential treatment. The Congress President declared:

Therefore, at the Narora Central Training Camp, it was decided to organize the agricultural labourers and the rural poor. Nearly half of them belong to the scheduled castes. *If the Congress does not take the initiative to organize them, other parties will step in.* Already in some states, some parties have entered the field . . . But the Congress *does not wish to encourage class conflict*¹ (Emphasis added).

As we study the food question, the entire field of agrarian relations and allied problems, of which it forms only a part, unfolds itself. Class character of agrarian relations in turn reflects the class character of the state, the government and the ruling party: state policies regarding production and distribution of food form a set of useful instruments to translate it into the reality of political economy.

In this study, special attention is devoted to cereals among foodgrains, and within this category, I have singled out certain features and trends relating to wheat and rice. A closer scrutiny of these two major cereals is helpful towards a clear understanding of certain aspects of the situation.

I

Fat of the Land

Production of foodgrains involves primarily (1) land (2) labour (3) agricultural implements (4) irrigation (5) seeds and (6) fertilizers. The factors of demand, supply and price are also relevant. But in India demand is virtually a constant factor and almost totally inelastic, relative to variations in price or consumer's income. Of the six factors mentioned, labour is so abundant that its price can be dictated by the wage-hiring landowners. Seeds form a part of the produce. In case of improved variety of seeds, a new element does operate, but for the purposes of our study all the details are not essential.² We shall however take up land, irrigation, and fertilizers for special treatment. Although agricultural credit comes into both production and distribution, its role in production is especially considerable.

Area under production can be expanded in two ways: reclamation of uncultivated land, and increasing the number of crops on a given land surface. Table I shows the increase in the extent of land under cultivation.

TABLE I
AREA UNDER PRODUCTION, ALL INDIA, 1950-51—70-71

('000 hectares)

Year	Area sown				Wheat	Jowar	Bajra	Maize	Total		Total non-food- grains
	Net area sown	more than once	Total area	cropped					cereals	foodgrains	
1950-51	118746	13147	131893	31056	10010	15534	9744	3250	80642	107096	24797
1955-56	129156	18155	147311	31633	12704	17447	10972	3811	87717	118127	29184
1960-61	133199	19573	152772	34056	12931	18426	11470	4401	91899	123394	29378
1961-62	135399	20810	156209	34656	13565	18220	11275	4501	92893	125039	31170
1962-63	136341	20419	156760	35734	13589	18402	10961	4646	93779	125311	31449
1963-64	136483	20480	156963	35745	13519	18370	11105	4586	93372	125575	31392
1964-65	138120	21109	159229	36359	13453	18025	11916	4617	94256	127001	32228
1965-66	136242	19122	155364	35358	12540	17623	11959	4799	92129	123560	31804
1966-67	137299	20102	157401	35060	12775	18117	12787	5199	93940	123592	33909
1967-68	139849	23803	165632	36010	14902	17901	12798	5603	98085	128778	36854
1968-69	137556	22106	159662	35872	15616	17642	12052	5716	97481	119342	49320
1969-70	138704	25078	163782	37270	16785	16984	12493	5862	99843	122770	41012
1970-71	141161	26251	167412	37387	18139	16994	12913	5852	101666	124659	42753

source: For all figures up to 1967-68, *Indian Agricultural Statistics*, Summary Tables, 1973.

For the figures for 1968-69, 69-70, and 70-71, *Indian Agriculture in Brief*, Thirteenth edition (except in the figures for bajra and maize, which are quoted from *Estimates of Area and Production of Principal Crops in India 1972-73*). While the first two are comparable, the last one is not comparable with others. But differences are marginal and these do not reflect any change in indicators.

Reclamation of land has resulted in increases, in absolute terms, from 118746 thousand hectares in 1950-51 to 135399 thousand hectares in 1961-62, and to 141161 thousand hectares in 1970-71. Additional area under multiple-cropping has increased from 13147 thousand hectares to 20810 thousand, and to 26251 thousand hectares in the respective decades. In relative terms the share of the reclaimed land has gone down and correspondingly the share of area under multiple-cropping has gone up. This relative picture is indicated in table II. Expansion in the total area under

TABLE II
RELATIVE SHARES OF NEW LAND AND MULTIPLE CROPPING IN
INCREASE IN TOTAL CROPPED AREA

Year	Net area sown	Area sown more than once	(Percentages) Total cropped area
1950-51	90.0	10.0	100
1955-56	87.7	12.3	100
1960-61	87.2	12.8	100
1965-66	87.7	12.3	100
1968-69	86.2	13.8	100
1969-70	84.7	15.3	100
1970-71	84.3	15.7	100

SOURCE: *Indian Agriculture in Brief* (13th edition).

crops has come about more through increasing the number of crops on a given land area. By and large, the most important factor in increasing the number of crops is irrigation water, and obviously, controlled irrigation water. Figures relating to increase in irrigated area (Table III) indicate

TABLE III
IRRIGATED AREA

Year	Net area irrigated	Area irrigated more than once	(*000 hectares) Gross irrigated area
1950-51	20853	1710	22563
1955-56	22758	2884	25642
1960-61	24661	3319	27980
1965-66	26342	4537	30879
1969-70	30340	6376	37216
1970-71	31292	7260	38552

SOURCES: *Indian Agricultural Statistics*, Summary Tables; *Indian Agriculture in Brief* (12th and 13th editions).

this, if viewed in relation to the trends indicated in table II. This means in simple though general terms, that the benefits of expansion of cropped area have accrued more to the owners of big landed property than to other sections of landowners. This can be more clearly established when the trend in cropping pattern and preferences, sources of irrigation, and use of other agricultural inputs are examined in their inter-relationships.

But the basis for all this is constituted by the pattern of landownership. This is essentially the question of property relations in agriculture. But a complete picture of agrarian relations cannot be obtained only from data relating to *legal* ownership. There are owner-peasants and semi-owner peasants, mainly sharecroppers. These two can be located within the limits of statistics and formal recording of data, when land owned and land operated are seen in combination. But it is very important to remember that no amount of officially recorded statistics can provide an *accurate* picture of the property-ownership situation in agriculture or of the modes of exploitation.

On landownership and operational landholding, there is some data available from the census and the National Sample Survey which enable us broadly to identify the situation from 1951 to 1960-61 and in some respects upto 1970-71.

TABLE IV
POPULATION DEPENDENT ON AGRICULTURE, 1951 CENSUS

	Millions	Percentage
Cultivators: Wholly or mainly owners and their dependants	167	67.1
Wholly or mainly non-owners and their dependants	32	13.1
Cultivating labourers and their dependants	45	17.8
Non-cultivating owners and their dependants	5	2.0
Total	249	100.0

SOURCE: Planning Commission, *Report of the Committee of the Panel on Land Reforms*.

Table IV indicates that in 1950-51, two per cent of the rural population were non-cultivating owners or their dependants. Undoubtedly, this minority belonged to landlord families, or in other words, those who did not participate in any major agricultural operation². On the other hand, the percentage of population who were mostly owner-peasants constituted 67.1 per cent while 13.1 per cent were mostly tenant-peasants, that is, sharecroppers. These two groups together formed the bulk of agricultural labourers of whom quite a few were landless. This broadly conforms to data in table V according to which 22 per cent of rural

TABLE V
CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ESTIMATED NUMBER
OF HOUSEHOLDS AND OF TOTAL AREA OPERATED/OWNED, BY
SIZE-LEVEL OF HOUSEHOLD-OWNERSHIP HOLDINGS

Size-level	Percentage (owned)		Percentage (operated)	
	Households	Area	Households	Area
0.00	22	—	6	—
up to 1 Acre	47	1	40	1
1.0-2.5 Acres	61	6	54	5
2.5-5.0 „	75	16	70	16
5.0-7.5 „	83	26	79	27
7.5-10.0 „	88	35	85	36
10 - 15 „	93	48	91	49
15 - 20 „	96	58	94	60
20 - 25 „	97	65	96	67
25 - 30 „	98	71	97	73
30 - 50 „	99	84	99	86
Above				
50 „	100	100	100	100

SOURCE: National Sample Survey (NSS), Eighth Round.

families did not have any land and (not less than) 43 per cent cultivated less than one acre each; 64 per cent families cultivated less than 5 acres each and 16 per cent of total area. Thus most of the tenant-peasants came from within this section.

Landlessness on the Increase

Between 1950-51 and 1960-61 the much-talked-of 'land reforms' Congress-style, was introduced. Apart from other consequences, the details of which are not important for us here, the 'land reforms' led to a much higher rate of eviction of tenants. This is widely admitted by the official agencies and spokesmen, and even by the Congress Party members in their closed circles. It may be interesting to read an elaborate confession of the party at the Narora Camp:

The land reform legislations which were enacted to benefit sharecroppers and small tenants were for the reform of the tenancy system. However, the basic principle that land should go to the actual tillers has not been realized. Then again, in spite of legislation in nearly all the states, there have been reports of evasion of the law. One of the commonest ways in which tenants were ejected from the land by landlords was by forcing them to "voluntarily surrender" their land... Studies undertaken by different organizations have revealed that the legal safeguards providing all tenants with security of tenure appear to have been violated in almost all states. The legislation to aid

tenants and sharecroppers by regulation of rent has also been frustrated⁴.

The result was obvious: decline in the number and percentage of tenants, increase in the number and percentage of agricultural labourers (non-tenant) and concentration of land, though relatively in a higher proportion of rural households.

This is borne out by table VI. The total percentage of land leased-in goes down to 9.46 in 1960-61. If we separate the peasants from other tenants, assuming that land holders of up to 10 acres are peasants, this percentage becomes much more insignificant. Out of roughly 333000 thousand acres of land under cultivation in 1960-61 about 18875 thousand acres were leased-in, which is equivalent to roughly 6 per cent of total land under cultivation.

TABLE VI

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLD OPERATIONAL HOLDINGS:
RURAL INDIA, 1960-61

Size class of household operational holdings (acres)	Estimated number of households	Estimated area operated ('000 acres)	Area operated by households : Leased-in (Percentage)
up to 0.99	30409	4294	44.93
1.00 „ 2.49	11326	19026	16.22
2.50 „ 4.99	11717	41991	14.29
5.00 „ 7.49	6537	39529	12.35
7.50 „ 9.99	3483	29804	11.26
10.00 „ 12.49	2492	27456	7.64
12.50 „ 14.99	1438	19629	6.62
15.00 „ 19.99	1832	31360	5.82
20.00 „ 24.99	1088	23912	5.17
25.00 „ 29.99	629	17100	6.02
30.00 „ 49.99	1047	38919	7.56
50.00 and above	468	36565	6.82
All sizes	72466	329585	9.46

SOURCE: B S Minhas, *Planning and the Poor*, on the basis of NSS No. 176 (ISI)

If we take into account a statewide break-up, the picture becomes clearer. According to one calculation based on the 20 per cent Household Sample and tables of the 1961 Census,

Upto one acre operational holdings the full tenants do not constitute more than 1 per cent except in Kerala (5.3) and in Assam, Bihar and Madras (about 2 per cent). Part tenants upto one acre also constitute less than 1 per cent except in Bihar where they are 2 per cent... Tenants between 1 and 5 acres, full or part tenants are in Assam (16.5

per cent); West Bengal (13.2 per cent), Bihar (11.4 per cent) Kerala and Orrissa (about 9.5 per cent); Madras and Mysore about 8 per cent and in all other States less than 5 per cent...Taking all tenants, between 1 and 10 acres, full or part tenants, together they are only, in Assam 22.6 percent, in Bihar and Bengal 17 per cent and in Mysore, Orrissa, Punjab-Haryana about 13 per cent. In all other states (they are) less than 5-10 per cent⁵.

Ownership Myth

Between 1960-61 and 1970-71, this trend has not only continued but further intensified. We do not have land-owned and land-operated data for 1971. But the very fact that proportion of agricultural labourers has risen from 16.71 per cent of the total population in 1961 to 25.71 per cent in 1971⁶ is enough indication that eviction of tenants has taken place at a higher rate between 1961 and 1971 than between 1951 and 1961. Therefore for the purpose of our study of ownership of land by the peasants particularly the middle and poor peasants, the question of tenancy or the category of sharecroppers has been kept out. We have tried to deal with this question since the extent of tenancy has remained controversial. Besides, it is necessary for assessing the peasant's income from land on the basis of data on sizes of landholdings. The practice of landlords or rich peasants leasing-in land from small peasants has been most noticeable during recent years. This is one way of actually owning the land shown as leased-in, for in such cases, the poor peasant is the owner only on paper, the actual owner being the landlord or rich peasant. This is one consequence of the Congress 'land reforms'.

In the absence of information relating to landownership in 1971, or after 1960-61, it is not possible to get even a broad picture. We have consumption income statistics, regional survey reports on change in the landownership pattern,⁷ rural indebtedness, population below the poverty line, and other relevant data all of which invariably establish that the percentage of land owned by middle and poor peasants has gone down severely and that the land alienated from these sections of the peasantry (particularly the poor peasants) has generally gone into the hands of landlords as well as of a small section of rich peasants. But since such a conclusion may be questioned unless substantiated with acceptable data, we take it that the landownership situation has not changed since 1960-61. This assumption does not hold good and presents a picture that is necessarily 'favourable' to the big landowners, especially the landlords. But our argument will be: even assuming that the percentages of land owned by different size-groups remained constant between 1960-61 and 1970-71, the picture is much worse than what is generally presented by many economists and official spokesmen, particularly so when it comes to calculating consumption of food by the rural poor. We should particularly mention two authorities in this connection. B S Minhas has estimated percentages of land owned by different size-groups in 1969-70 on the assumption that these have not

changed since 1960-61. His case against 'radical' land reform is based on this estimate.⁸ The Agricultural Prices Commission, 1967-68, based its calculations of surplus cereals and rates of 'graded producer levy' on the same assumption.⁹

II

Inputs: Irrigation

We shall now see that the actual availability and utilization of inputs (irrigation water, chemical fertilizers, improved implements and agricultural credit) are all essentially beneficial to landlords and a section of rich peasants and invariably adverse to the others particularly the entire poor peasantry and substantial strata of the middle peasantry. The actual character of expansion of area under production and of increase in production of cereals will also be reflected here.

Data on increase in irrigated area reveal a number of things. The most important source of irrigation has been government canals since ever plans began. The canals were dug as part of the huge public investment on irrigation projects. Almost all other means of irrigation (a marginal role being played by wells of the traditional type and an insignificant sprinkling of minor tubewells) call for private investment and ownership. The most important of these sources have been wells (including tubewells) used with the help of pumpsets (diesel or electric pumps) and tanks. Tanks, mostly concentrated in coastal states, combine irrigation with fishbreeding. Such land under fishery tanks is generally

TABLE VII

AREA IRRIGATED, BY SOURCES AND CROPS—ALL INDIA

(Percentages)

Source-crops	1950-51	1955-56	1960-61	1965-66	1969-70	1970-71
Sources:						
Govt. lands	34.3	35.3	37.2	37.3	37.4	37.1
Private lands	5.5	6.0	4.9	4.3	3.0	2.9
Tanks	17.3	19.4	18.5	16.2	14.5	14.5
Wells	28.7	29.6	29.6	32.8	36.8	37.8
Others	14.2	9.7	9.8	9.4	8.3	7.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(Net Irrigated)						
Crops:						
Rice	43.8	43.0	44.7	41.8	39.4	38.7
Wheat	15.1	16.2	15.1	17.5	23.0	25.5
Total cereals	72.6	72.7	72.1	70.9	73.5	74.1
Total foodgrains	81.2	80.4	78.9	77.8	79.2	79.3
Total All Crops	100	100	100	100	100	100
(Gross Irrigated)						

SOURCE: *Indian Agriculture in Brief*, 13th edition.

kept out of the ceiling limits, providing a loophole for evaders of land ceiling laws.

Table VII clearly indicates the following: (a) increase in irrigated area has come only from two sources: government canals, and wells; (b) within these two categories increase in area under government canals has been less than 3 per cent, while that under wells has been about 9 per cent; (c) the rate of decline in the shares of other sources of irrigation has been the lowest; (the reason for this has been explained above); (d) area under cereals declined between 1955-56 and 1965-66, and increased over the period 1950-51 to 1970-71 as a whole, but this increase has been only marginal at 1.5 per cent; (e) area under rice increased upto 1966-67 by about 1 per cent, but decreased sharply by 6 per cent between 1950-68¹⁹ and 1970-71; and by about 5 per cent between 1950-51 and 1970-71; (f) area under wheat increased by only 1.1 per cent between 1950-51 and 1955/56, then declined by 1.1 per cent during the next five years, but increased steadily since then—more than 10 per cent between 1960-61, of which increase between 1965-66 and 1970-71 alone has been more than 8 per cent; and lastly (g) area under all foodgrains has been constantly declining since 1950-51, though percentage of area under all foodgrains to total area under production of all crops has not declined.

Water for the Big Few

All these trends mean that (a) the rate of increase has been lower in public investment on irrigation and significantly higher in private investment, mostly on pumpsets; (b) benefits of additional area under irrigation has accrued to those landowners who have a sizeable surplus (these are generally landlords, but also include rich peasants in varying proportions in different states or regions); (c) such additional benefits mean increased return from land both from higher yield and a wider variety of crops; and (d) at the all India level wheat has been preferred as the crop for cultivation.

Increase in area under government canal irrigation should theoretically mean that this benefit has been shared equally by all sizes of landholdings. Not so in practice. Generally, big landowners have a much higher proportion of their land in proximity of such canals. New land brought under cultivation with the help of government canal irrigation has largely gone to the big landowners. Then, the consolidation of holdings essentially resulted in these landowners getting more land nearer to the government canals in exchange for land far away from the canals. Lastly, irrigation duty payable for use of canal water was and is, often beyond the reach of the smaller landowners, particularly the poor peasants.

A clearer picture of regionwise variation reveals a few additional features of the character of development. The trend reflected in figures available for 1965-66 to 1967-68 should only be further intensified in 1970-71, since it is during this period that the 'Green Revolution' was on,

and irrigation from pumpsets increased substantially. The figure for 1970-71 indicates the share of irrigated area in total area sown more than once, of which, as stated earlier, the largest part belongs to big landowners. The proportion of net irrigated area to the gross is higher in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh if the relevant figures in these states are compared to all-India figures. But if along with this proportion are set the relevant percentages and absolute number of households with bigger holding sizes and also the relative acreages under production in each state, it will be generally established that the above-said benefits have accrued mostly to the big landholders in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh which together form the wheat belt of the country. Farm Management Studies and districtwise wheat data further reinforce this conclusion. In these states, irrigation from tubewells and other wells increased substantially from about 3000 thousand hectares in 1965-66 to 4034 thousand hectares in Uttar Pradesh; from about 1170 thousand in 1966-67 to 1591 thousand hectares in 1970-71 in Punjab; and from about 290 thousand hectares in 1966-67 to 571 thousand hectares in Haryana in 1970-71. It is widely known that these three states have the highest proportion of diesel and electric pumpsets.

Among the major rice-producing states, the big landowners in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Orissa have particularly benefited. West Bengal, too, is by no means an exception. In Andhra Pradesh irrigation from tanks did not increase substantially, but till 1967-68, area irrigated from tanks and government canals have been almost equal. Besides, there has been a sizable increase in irrigation from other wells between 1967-68 and 1970-71. Kerala shows a big increase in irrigation from private canals, and also from tanks. The same is true of Orissa. For Tamil Nadu, we do not have tank irrigation figures from 1965-66 to 1967-68. The 1970-71 figure shows that area irrigated by tanks was bigger than total area irrigated by canals, government and private.

Use of Chemical Fertilizers

It is obvious that the varying degrees of affluence and surplus appropriation are closely associated with the use of fertilizers (chemical fertilizers or soil nutrients known as N , P_2O_5 and K_2O). We have gross irrigated area figures for 1970-71, and fertilizer utilization figures by states, for 1972-73 and 1973-74 in table VIII which reflect this relationship.

The figures in table VII, however, do not reveal a very precise picture. Optimum utilization of fertilizers varies from crop to crop, and from one soil type to another. Besides, even a statewide break-up of consumption per unit of cropped area cannot be anything more than a broad indication of actual differences or disparities. A concrete picture emerges only if the per unit consumption figures relating to different crops and different sizes of holdings in each region are available. In the absence of

TABLE VIII
FETILIZER USE AND YIELDS

State	Gross irrigated area (‘000 hectares)	Use of soil nutrients (kilogrammes)		Use of ferti- lizers per unit of crop- ped area (Kg per hectare)	
		1970-71	1972-73 1973-74	1972-73	1973-74
Andhra Pradesh	4223	275	281	20.9	21.0
Assam	572	10	8	3.7	2.9
Bihar	2732	119	97	10.7	8.9
Gujarat	1307	178	212	17.5	21.1
Haryana	2230	94	115	19.0	23.2
Karnataka	1355	202	196	18.7	17.9
Kerala	601	75	82	25.8	27.9
Madhya Pradesh	1523	140	141	6.8	6.9
Maharashtra	1656	200	261	10.3	13.5
Orissa	1624	59	63	6.7	7.5
Punjab	4234	323	330	58.7	58.7
Rajasthan	2453	58	74	4.1	4.4
Tamil Nadu	3420	324	341	45.3	46.2
Uttar Pradesh	8344	519	465	22.7	20.1
West Bengal	1541	92	99	13.0	14.0
All India	38550	2699	2839	16.5	16.9

SOURCE: *Fertiliser Statistics, 1973-74*

such data only broad indications can be observed from the state averages. For example, the percentages of gross area irrigated in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh out of total gross area irrigated in India are about 6, 10 and 21 respectively. Together these three states constituted nearly 37 per cent of total gross irrigated area in the country in 1970-71. In 1972-73, when the supply position of fertilizers was slightly unfavourable, these states together used up 34 per cent of total chemical fertilizers. Thus it is not totally incorrect to say that the application of fertilizers in the wheat region is somewhat higher especially in view of widespread reports that a part of chemical fertilizers distributed in neighbouring states find their way through clandestine trade routes.

HYV Seeds

The differential facilities for irrigation water and fertilizers lead to differences in the utilization of high yielding variety (HYV) seeds and consequent variations in yield per unit of cropped area. We have two sets of data, one relating to increase in HYV areas in wheat-producing states (table IX) and another relating to the comparative position between wheat and rice (table X).

TABLE IX
TRENDS IN HYV AREA AND PRODUCTION OF WHEAT

State	1966-67			1967-68			1968-69			
	Total	HYV	Percentage of HYV	Total	HYV	Percentage of HYV	Total	HYV	Percentage of HYV	
(Area in '000 hectares) (Production in '000 tonnes)										
Bihar	Area	809	27	3.3	1056	182	17.2	1052	243	23.1
	Production	365	—	—	882	450	51.0	1100	600	54.5
Gujarat	Area	461	1	0.2	553	161	29.0	500	202	40.4
	Production	457	—	—	700	—	—	550	—	—
Haryana	Area	738	15	2.0	846	100	11.8	689	244	35.4
	Production	1054	—	—	1466	250	17.1	1250	610	48.8
Madhya Pradesh	Area	2134	16	0.8	2557	45	1.8	2910	142	4.9
	Production	1031	—	—	1869	75	4.0	2000	122	6.1
Maharashtra	Area	876	8	0.9	929	13	1.9	1000	202	20.2
	Production	367	—	—	367	—	—	400	—	—
Karnataka	Area	298	1	0.3	298	11	3.7	300	32	10.7
	Production	47	—	—	79	21	26.6	100	61	61.0
Punjab	Area	1615	57	3.5	1804	625	34.6	1700	1052	61.9
	Production	2494	—	—	3400	1705	50.1	4000	2930	73.3
Rajasthan	Area	961	9	0.9	1247	126	10.1	1000	202	20.2
	Production	872	—	—	1305	347	26.6	1000	—	—
Uttar Pradesh	Area	4394	363	8.3	5645	1587	31.5	4654	2325	50.0
	Production	4230	900	21.3	5953	3820	64.2	6600	4860	73.6

SOURCE: *Agricultural Situation in India.*

TABLE X
AREA UNDER PRODUCTION AND HYV AREAS, RICE AND WHEAT
(Area in '000 hectares)
(Production for 71-73 in '000 tonnes)

	Rice										Wheat					
	1965-66	66-67	67-68	68-69	69-70	70-71	71-72	72-73	65-66	66-67	67-68	68-69	69-70	70-71	71-72	72-73
State							(725)	(1200)								
Andhra Pradesh	3139.5	3322.9	3399.4	3053.4	3300.1	3521.2	3040.8	2577.9	12.9	13.9	13.8	12.9	16.1	16.9	21.1	16.6
						(200)	(274)								(30)	(148)
Assam	1940.0	1974.4	2010.4	2199.2	2243.3	1968.4	1967.6	2068.8	4.8	5.4	6.6	7.5	11.8	20.7	40.0	112.0
						(440)	(452)								(1213)	(1640)
Bihar	5248.4	4420.2	5201.0	5427.8	5492.9	5274.7	5411.2	4715.5	675.2	833.0	1055.3	1095.4	1145.0	1315.6	1397.4	2509.1
						(60)	(86)								(261)	(233)
Gujarat	536.2	506.4	507.4	489.4	499.1	488.6	474.5	405.2	515.0	427.0	553.8	502.5	432.6	577.2	574.5	371.3
						(70)	(92)								(796)	(1000)
Haryana	(includ- ed in Punjab)	192.2	216.5	223.0	241.0	269.0	291.0	292.0	—	742.5	841.0	895.0	1017.1	1129.0	1177.0	1231.0
						(160)	(202)								(49)	(67)
Karnataka	1058.4	1111.5	1102.6	1192.6	1106.3	1159.8	1120.2	1010.4	248.4	285.7	309.4	309.5	327.3	304.9	346.5	298.6
						(365)	(190)								—	—
Kerala	802.3	799.5	809.6	925.5	872.6	874.8	875.2	872.4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
						(400)	(497)								(291)	(436)
Madhya Pradesh	4175.2	4177.1	4168.1	4391.2	4319.3	4383.5	4525.6	4484.2	2394.9	2126.2	2658.3	3055.6	3175.7	3403.1	3665.3	3529.0

	Rice								Wheat								
Maharashtra	1321.3	1354.3	1338.7	1372.0	1392.3	1355.8	1331.6	1284.8	832.9	839.5	828.2	875.1	865.1	882.0	1009.3	(207)	(310)
Orissa	4261.1	4253.1	4336.5	4299.0	4506.2	4511.2	4646.0	4455.0	13.3	15.8	14.5	14.1	14.9	13.0	20.9	(13)	(40)
Punjab	541.9	285.3	314.5	338.0	384.4	389.9	450.0	476.0	2388.7	1607.7	1789.7	2086.0	2162.6	2299.2	2335.4	(1695)	(1884)
Rajasthan	94.1	78.4	95.0	129.4	115.0	119.5	133.4	135.6	966.6	961.3	1264.5	1162.3	1253.6	1478.1	1513.7	(467)	(600)
Tamil Nadu	2501.9	2589.0	2659.8	2571.9	2695.2	2686.2	2691.0	2641.0	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.8	2.2	(2200)
Uttar Pradesh	4205.7	4317.9	4269.4	4521.1	4533.9	4562.5	4722.2	4413.0	4114.7	4394.2	4969.7	5239.1	5378.4	5907.2	6045.9	(385)	(345)
West Bengal	4670.9	4648.7	4648.7	4858.8	5015.5	4955.6	4991.4	5070.9	40.8	55.4	55.4	150.0	240.0	360.2	422.4	(7858)	(10250)
All India	35357.7	35060.1	36010.1	36966.3	37880.3	37591.7	37757.8	36019.2	12540.1	12774.7	14902.5	15958.1	16625.5	18240.5	19138.9	(10250)	

SOURCES: *Indian Agriculture in Brief; Estimates of Principal Crops and Area under Production; Fertiliser Statistics, etc.*

In table IX many figures are missing. But on the basis of those available, the following conclusions become clear: (a) in every state in 1967-68 and 1968-69, yield per unit of cropped area in HYV areas is higher than in non-HYV; (b) by 1968-69, percentages of HYV areas in wheat came up to 23.1 in Bihar, 40.4 in Gujarat, 35.4 in Haryana, 61.9 in Punjab and 50 in UP; (c) the corresponding figures of production came upto 54.5, in Bihar, 48.8 in Haryana, 73.3 in Punjab, and 73.6 in UP; (d) figures for subsequent areas if available would have possibly modified these comparative rates partly, (but here we are concerned with the growing concentration of HYV areas in Haryana, Punjab and UP); (e) since by and large, extension of HYV areas leads to a greater degree of adversity for poor peasants in particular, in most states this expansion has its obvious implications for further differentiation among the peasantry.

The essential results of this trend are visible more concretely in table X. Here we have comparative HYV area figures for rice and wheat in 1971-72 and 1972-73. The all-India figures for HYV of rice are 7397,000 hectares out of a total 37757,800 in 1971-72, and 8171,000 out of 36019,200 hectares in 1972-73. On the other hand the corresponding figures for wheat are 7858,000 out of 19138,900 and 10250,000 out of 19881,200 respectively. In percentage terms, the figures for rice HYV will be about 19 and 23 and those for wheat will be about 41 and 52. In 1971-72 wheat HYV areas were more than 72 per cent in Punjab, more than 67 per cent in Haryana, and above 36 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. These three states together constitute 50 per cent of total all-India area under wheat, but above 69 per cent of total HYV wheat area.

This concentration on wheat in terms of cropping preference, availability of inputs like irrigation water, chemical fertilizers and improved variety of seeds, has led to an enclave-like development in the production of cereals. As we have seen earlier the rate of growth of area under production has shown a declining trend in every other cereal while in wheat alone it has shown a constantly rising trend after the green revolution was initiated. This has also led to severe regional disparities in the availability of cereals; such a gap between deficit and surplus states has been one of the instruments of manipulation of market prices of cereals. This point has been adequately dealt with by Prabhat Patnaik.⁹

Agricultural Implements

That brings us to the question of agricultural implements. Except in the case of traditional cultivation by the plough, all other implements referred to here are labour-saving and to that extent reduce the per capita cost of production. As a result, the return per unit that accrues to the owner of property goes up, and this process leads to a continuous process of accumulation of the surplus. It has been widely debated whether such labour-saving devices are socially useful or beneficial either for higher productivity of land or for redistribution of income in favour

of the overwhelming majority of the rural population who constitute the rural poor. We cannot go into the question in detail here. But our data show that increase in utilization of improved implements has almost inevitably led to further increase in the poverty of the rural poor and a substantial increase in the income of big landowners, intensifying the process of concentration of land. In table XI is presented data relating to growth of

TABLE XI

AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND IMPLEMENTS, ALL INDIA

	1956	1961	1966	Percentage change in 1966 over 1961
Ploughs (millions)	37.5	40.7	43.4	(+) 6.6
Oil engines(thousands)	123	230	471	(+) 104.8
Electric pumps (thousands)	47	160	415	(+) 158.9
Tractors (thousands)	21	31	54	(+) 74.1

SOURCE: *Indian Agriculture in Brief* (13th edition).

these implements at the all-India level. In table XII is given a state-wise break-up of the all-India figures for 1966. We do not have data for any of the subsequent years in official statistics. It can be safely assumed that the trend reflected in these two tables has only intensified further during the subsequent years: different survey reports also confirm this.

Increase in ploughs between 1961 and 1966 has been only 6.6 per cent, whereas the percentage of agricultural workers during this period increased at a much higher rate. It means that many poor peasants who had owned a plough in 1961 were without it by 1966 either because they were reduced to landless labourers, or because they could not afford to replace the one that had gone out of use. On the other hand, irrigation with diesel engines and electric pumps increased sharply (as we have seen earlier) and in a large number of cases tractors replaced the plough and a sizable proportion of human labour.

Table XII should be studied with certain other factors in view. Absolute numbers of implements does not as such indicate things clearly and these numbers should be viewed in relation to the area under production in each state. Thus, in terms of numbers Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra appear to have a high concentration of oil engines and electric pumps. But these states have a bigger area under production. The fact that a small state like Punjab had oil engines nearly equal to U P, and that electric pumps and tractors in Punjab were more numerous than in UP, are enough indications of relative concentration. The tractor figures for Haryana also tell the same story. All this shows that while in all the states the big landowners have evicted many tenants for cultivation mainly with wage-labour, concentration of such 'resumption' (the emergence of the new type of landlord who appropriates surplus by

TABLE XII
AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND IMPLEMENTS

1966, STATEWISE

State	Ploughs (wooden & iron) (thousands)	Oil engines (units)	Electric pumps (units)	Tractors (units)
Andhra Pradesh	3292	46741	57225	2911
Assam	1429	362	22	834
Bihar	4017	3698	6854	2132
Gujarat	1585	112428	14729	3248
Haryana	731	3656	12230	4850
Karnataka	2553	24575	27054	2595
Kerala	493	6824	4869	418
Madhya Pradesh	4599	16511	6116	2513
Maharashtra	2230	146786	37979	3274
Orissa	2803	710	189	667
Punjab	1333	25670	20233	10646
Rajasthan	2506	7252	4954	4195
Tamil Nadu	3772	42852	203485	3278
Uttar Pradesh	8484	28146	10197	10139
West Bengal	2427	4162	629	1548
All India	43401	470968	414610	54012

SOURCE: *Indian Agriculture in Brief* (13th edition)

employing wage-labour) has taken place at a much greater degree in Punjab, Haryana, and western UP as a whole. This type of landlord is more market-minded in his approach to agriculture.

Credit Facilities

The last item as an input for production is capital, more concretely in the form of credit. All that we have discussed so far reflects the state policy also. But we have not gone into discussing this aspect of the agrarian question directly. Public credit, that is, loans advanced by the State Bank group and the nationalized banks, directly reflects the agricultural credit policy of the state. It is here that the state reveals itself most openly. In table XIII, we have three types of credit data: statewide distribution of short-term loans and term loans; purposewise distribution of term loans, and distribution of short-term and term loans according to sizes of holdings.

The purpose of the short-term loan is not specified. It is not of course given for any of the purposes mentioned in section B of the table. It is widely known that the rural poor are heavily indebted and that the actual rate of interest paid by this section is unimaginably high. In section C we find that 24 per cent of total short-term loans were given to landholders of 2.5 acres or less in or before 1972-73. This section of landholders, the

A STATEWISE DISTRIBUTION B TERM LOANS BY PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS (PURPOSEWISE)				C LOANS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF HOLDINGS			
State	Short term loans	Term loans	Purpose	State Bank group	Nationalized banks	Percentage to Total	Percentage to Total
Construction of							
godowns, cold							
Kerala	251.44	390.19	storage	41.04	54.16	95.20	0.6
Short-Term Loans							
Madhya Pradesh	202.99	764.04	Plantations	45.88	1030.75	1076.63	6.7
Maharashtra	1316.64	3197.75	Other term loans	215.49	703.13	718.62	5.7
Orissa	108.98	27.35	Total	3861.18	12238.18	16099.36	100.0
Punjab	83.17	750.47					2.5-5 "
Rajasthan	59.67	992.69					5-10 "
Tamil Nadu	1638.69	1233.01					Above 10 "
Uttar Pradesh	274.86	2212.27					Total
West Bengal	254.21	1022.47					2822.70
All India	7732.26	16099.36					4909.56
							7732.26
							100.0

SOURCE: Reserve Bank of India, quoted in *Fertiliser Statistics, 1973-74*.

TABLE XIV
PRODUCTION OF FOODGRAINS AND CEREALS

	1955-56	1960-61	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73
	(Million tonnes)									
Foodgrains	69.34	82.33	72.35	74.23	95.05	94.01	99.50	108.42	105.17	95.20
Cereals	57.63	69.59	62.40	65.88	82.95	83.60	87.81	96.60	94.07	85.71
Rice	28.65	34.60	30.59	30.44	37.61	39.76	40.43	42.23	43.07	38.63
Wheat	8.87	11.00	10.39	11.39	16.54	18.65	20.09	23.83	26.41	24.92
Jowar	6.74	9.90	7.58	9.22	10.05	9.80	9.72	8.10	7.72	6.44
Bajra	3.46	3.29	3.75	4.47	5.19	3.80	5.33	8.03	5.32	3.80
Other cereals	9.91	10.81	10.09	10.36	13.56	11.58	12.24	14.42	11.56	11.92

SOURCE: *Economic Survey, 1973-74.*

poor peasantry, can only use the loan as consumption loan though possibly on paper it is different. This is also true of the landholders with between 2.5 and 5.0 acres if the country is taken as a whole. The state-wise break-up of short-term loans (Section A) largely conforms to this conclusion. With a few exceptions, the proportion of short-term loans is higher in the case of states with a higher percentage and number of agricultural labourers. In case of a few states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala, the ratio of term loan to short-term loan advances is either near equal or even higher. This is possibly explained by the fact that the number of households with holdings above 10 acres is relatively bigger in these states, as a result of which the total share of term-loans also becomes relatively greater. There is, however, another point to be noted: there are widespread reports that big landowners get bank loans at a cheaper interest rate and lend the same at a higher rate to the rural poor. Short-term loans for hoarding of stocks is, of course, legally permitted, except on very rare occasions. All this together may explain the differences in the relative shares of short-term loans of different size-groups.

About 77 per cent of the term loans are utilized by the landlords and a section of rich peasants in some states. This can be established in two ways: adding together the percentages of rows 1, 2, 4, and 6 of section B the total comes to about 77 per cent) or by relating this percentage to the total of rows 3 and 4 of section C. This total comes to 83.1. If we assure that households holding 7.5 to 10 acres of land are rich peasants in some states and, accordingly deduct a part of this size-group for adding to the last size-group, the result would be a picture of conformity between the relevant figures in sections B and C. Thus the entire credit policy is almost solely biased in favour of landlords.

III

Shifts in Graingrowing

Production of cereals and foodgrains has, of course, increased during the last 25 years. The peculiar character of this growth however, has been determined by the land relations (including the evolution of such relations during the period) by a set of government policies, and also by the overall character of the development of the economy.

Table XIV reflects the trend growth pattern of cereals and food-grain production. As in the case of growth trends in area under production of different cereals (particularly rice and wheat) "growth rate of agricultural production over 1952-55 to 1959-62 was 3.0 per cent, while for 1959-62 to 1969-72 it was 2 to 4 per cent."¹¹ From table XIV it is clear that substantial increase in production has taken place only in wheat and that this has led to the manifestation of an overall increase. This feature of growth has also led to a regionwise, cropwise concentration in production.

Data relating to growth rates of output of all foodgrains by states is available.¹²

The total output of foodgrains between 1964-65 and 1970-71 (two

agricultural peak years) increased by 18.8 million tonnes for India as a whole; about half of this increase, 9.7 million tonnes, come from only three states, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. By contrast, states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa showed either insignificant increases or even absolute declines in foodgrains between these two dates...

Between 1960-61 and 1970-71, while total foodgrain output increased by about 26 million tonnes, almost half of this or 13 million tonnes, was the increase registered by wheat alone. If we take 1971-72 as the end point, the share of wheat in the total increase jumps dramatically to about 60 per cent.¹³

We have already seen this trend consistently being strengthened in the data on area under production; its break-up according to state and crop (rice and wheat); irrigated area; supply and utilization of fertilizers; agricultural implements, machinery and credit and also in the growth trend in HYV areas, by state and crop.

Lastly, as indicated already, the production of cereals and foodgrains has been so fluctuating that except in a peak year during three or four year spans, availability of cereals from internal production has failed to meet the nation's requirements. That, of course, does not mean that whatever has been produced within the country has been entirely consumed in the same year or even marketed. However, the fact remains that even after 27 years of independence the government cannot ensure foodgrain production that would make the country self-sufficient. So far the biggest outlay of foreign exchange has been on import of foodgrains. What is more, even this much of growth has been achieved at the cost of raw materials for the industry, particularly jute and cotton.

(To be concluded)

- ¹ Introduction to Narora Background Paper, No 3.
- ² Reference will however be made to HYV seeds.
- ³ This is one definition of landlords. About the peasantry, wherever possible we have used the terms rich, middle and poor. Rich peasant is one whose family labour is utilized for participation in major agricultural operations, though he also employs wage-labour in a sizable proportion and has a surplus. The middle peasant mainly depends on his family labour for cultivation, but may also employ some wage-labour. His produce gives him the income for his consumption, and his surplus, if any, is marginal. The poor peasant is one whose family labour is mainly occupied in cultivating others' land, and his land cannot provide him with subsistence. He is, therefore, also an agricultural labourer.
- ⁴ Narora Background Paper No 3, p 10
- ⁵ P Sundarayya, *Central Committee Resolution on Certain Agrarian Issues*, Appendix.
- ⁶ Census Data, 1961 and 1971.
- ⁷ See conclusion of this article.
- ⁸ BS Minhas, *Planning and the Poor*, Chapter II.
- ⁹ APC Report on Kharif Cereals, for 1967-68.
- ¹⁰ Prabhat Patnaik, "Current Inflation in India" *Social Scientist* 30-31, January-February, 1975.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 24.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p 27.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p 28.

N VANAMAMALAI

Herostone Worship in Ancient South India

THE DISCOVERY of 126 herostones in Chengam taluk in the North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu¹ marks an important archaeological event enriching perspectives of the social and cultural history of the Tamil people. The inscriptions on the stone monuments to dead heroes give added significance to this find: the chronological range and the qualitative differences in the iconographic and paleographic representations open up a rare opportunity to make investigations and postulate hypotheses about the beliefs of the people who erected and worshipped the stones.

Fresh material unearthed by the archaeologists under the guidance of R Nagaswamy must be put alongside literary material of the olden days to help us form an idea of the set of beliefs that inspired the herostone worshippers. In this article I propose to construct a series of conceptual images of ancient faiths and beliefs about the herostones of different epochs, link these images historically on the basis of literary and archaeological evidence, and trace the development of folk beliefs regarding the souls of heroes. I shall use data available in literature, cultural anthropology, folklore and epigraphy, on herostones and other monuments to ancestors. Herostones in Chengam are dated from the fifth to the sixteenth century AD. There are others discovered earlier in parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Herostones are mentioned in *Akananuru* and *Purananuru* and other poems traditionally classified as *Sangam* poems. *Tolkappiyam* (a grammatical work of the *Sangam* age) on the date of which there is wide disagreement among literary scholars, and *Purapporul Venbamalai*, a later text of the eighth century AD, also refer to the monuments erected to kings, generals and other members of the elite who fell in battle as *natukal* (erected stone). There are only few references to herostones for common soldiers who died fighting for their liege-lords and for folk heroes who were killed in clashes with marauders, cattle-lifters and invaders. In other words, elite herostones find more frequent mention than folk herostones.

There were sculptured as well as unsculptured pieces of stone standing, to the memory of fallen heroes, at street and road junctions³ with no edifice or structure over them. The sculptured stones are called *Katarul eluthia kal*³ (Stone inscribed by God) in *Sangam* classics. Most of these stones pay homage to the valiant deaths of kings and generals. For example *Puram* 231 announces the death of Athiaman Netuman Anji from spear wounds sustained in battle.⁴ *Puram* 243 speaks of the herostone erected to honour his memory.⁵ Auvai (ஔவை) has written an elegiac poem in *Puram* in which she mourns the deaths of her patron.

Ordained Rituals

Auvai's poem says that Athiaman becomes a stone and was fed with sacrificial food in a small bowl.⁶ The stone itself is described as adorned with a peacock feather, an indication that it must have been unsculptured. The peacock feather adornment and food and drink offerings were part of sacrificial rituals. References to such stone rituals are found in *Akam*, *Puram* and other *Sangam* texts although Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy observes that herostones which strictly pertain to the *Sangam* age have not been unearthed.⁷ We find descriptions of rituals in *Sangam* classics and prescribed forms of worship in *Tolkappiyam*, which appear to be propitiation rites for the disembodied souls of the royal and military dignitaries.

The herostones were set up originally on sites near to where the heroes met their death, or to where they were buried. When cremation of the dead became a common practice, the stones began to be placed in the villages where the heroes were born or where members of the family lived. It appears that at the root of this practice was the belief in the divisible nature of the soul a part of which can inhabit a tree, animal, bird or stone. This belief prevails among many tribal people today, and was quite common in ancient communities.

Transmigration is implied in the order of ritual for the erection of herostones. *Tolkappiyam* ordains six ceremonies. They are (1) *Katchi* (காட்சி): Discovery; (2) *Kalkol* (கால் கோல்): Invitation; (3) *Nerpatai* (நீர்ப்படை): Ceremonial bathing of the stone; (4) *Naluthal* (நலுதல்): Erection; (5) *Perumbatai* (பெரும்படை): Food offering and (1) *Valthu* (வாழ்த்து): Invocation and blessing.

The herostone ceremonies assume significance in the light of the anthropology of rituals, magic and worship. The first ritual of discovery consists in choosing the stone to be put up. Why should the oracle choose a particular stone to be deified? The answer is to be found in ancient belief in the divisible nature of the souls, a part of which may be deposited safely in a place outside the body. "Primitive man takes his soul out of his body and deposits it for security in a safe spot intending to replace it in his body when the danger is past."

Evidence of this primitive belief is abundantly furnished by folk stories. As J G Frazer observes: "On the theory here suggested wherever totemism is found, and wherever pretence is made of killing and bringing to life again the novice at initiation, there may exist or have existed not only a belief in the possibility of permanently depositing the soul in some external object—animal, plant, or part of a plant."

Frazer gives illustrations in hundreds of tribal legends and folk tales. We can extend this theory to the soul that has left its body for good. A part of it can reside in a favourite haunt even after death. It could be persuaded to visit a particular spot and temporarily remain there if people made sacrifices and invoked the soul to do so. A soul also could make a stone or tree its temporary dwelling place. Thus a soul that has departed this earth can leave its 'double' to visit a particular spot of its liking. Even after departure to a different world it can return to the place where its 'double' resides. It is this favourite haunt of the soul that the oracle is after in the katchi ritual.

Significance of Observances

Later, it was considered unnecessary to discover the favourite haunt because the soul could as well be persuaded to enter a particular stone by means of sacrifices and offerings. Believers of this modified theory are to be found among Tamils even today. They maintain that a disembodied soul can sojourn in a stone for a few days till the earthly obsequies are over. The two initial herostone rituals listed in Tolkappiyam could well be the identification of a stone where the soul does or can reside.

Neerpatai, the third rite is the ceremonial bath. Ancients believed that water possesses magical properties. Observing that water enriches and fertilizes the soil, they ascribed many mysterious powers to it. Thus water from particular spots was considered a cure for barrenness in women. A prince before he assumed kingship was bathed in sacred water which was believed to endow him with divine powers. Thus if the stone was washed to the accompaniment of specific ceremonies it was supposed to become a home fit for the hero's soul to live in.

Setting up the stone (natuthal) is followed by perumpatai and valthu, offerings and invocation respectively. The stone is put up in a place chosen by the oracle and offerings are presented. Then is the time for invocatory songs and ritual dancing.

A later text of the eighth century mentions six rites of which four

are identical with those prescribed by Tolkappiyar. The other two are *Kalmurai palikal* (கல்முறை பழிக்கல்): oblation and invocation and *Il kontupukutal* (இல் கொண்டு புகுதல்): carrying stone to its assigned place. The author of Purapporul Venbamalai combines the rites of oblation and invocation. What is new in the ritual series is fixing the herostone in its 'abode' which is sort of a megalithic structure. This is called the house of the stone, *il* (இல்).

The information contained in Tolkappiyam refers to the period called the Sangam age (first century BC to AD third century) whereas prescriptions appearing in Purapporul Venbamalai refer to the post-Sangam (AD fourth century to eighth century) rituals. These stones were mostly memorials to kings and members of the elite.

Folk Heroes of Chengam

The Chengam herostones are different. They commemorate folk heroes who were servants, slaves, common soldiers or village guards. The inscriptions identify them as having fallen in skirmishes with cattle-lifters, marauders or invading armies which passed through the countryside spreading death and destruction. These battles are called *poosal* (பூசல்).

Chengam heroes were mostly men of humble origin like: the *servant* of Vinnar; Gangaraisaru's *servant*; the *guard* of Karungalipatt^a.

Their names also point to their low status in society: Akkandai-kodan (அக்கந்தை கோடன்); Kaganti Annavan (காகண்டி அண்ணவன்); Karunchathan's son (கருஞ்சாத்தனுக் மகன்).

The circumstances of the valiant deaths are clearly stated in the inscriptions. Some died while rescuing cattleherds carried off by kings, feudal lords or hunters. The words "*Thoru ittuwithu pattan* (தொறு இடுவித் தூப் பட்டான்) are explicit enough, meaning "fell after winning back the cattle carried off". A few were killed while obstructing the cattle-stealing kings and chieftains. This end is indicated by the words, "*Poosalil pattan*" (பூசலில் பட்டான்): "Died in a skirmish."⁹

The inscriptions give a clue to the nature of cattle wealth which became the bone of contention: they refer mostly to *Erumai thoru* (herd of buffaloes) and less often, *An thoru* (herd of cows) and sometimes even a flock of sheep. The prosperity of Chengam region was based on livestock. The surrounding tribes used to raid villages and drive off the herds into their territory. Now and then the feudal lords who held sway over the tribals incited them to descend upon the peaceful villages, robbed the cattle with their help and shared the loot. The Chengam farmers and peasants were forced to organize themselves in self-defence squads. The memory of simple folk heroes who died in the fight to regain stolen cattle is enshrined in the stone monuments.

It is interesting to examine the system of beliefs underlying the rituals and ceremonies of herostone worship. Cultural anthropology and folklore provide only a few hints. Prehistoric peoples believed that souls disembodied possess more power than souls residing in bodies.¹⁰ This

power manifests itself as either constructive or destructive energy.¹¹ The disembodied souls are supposed to harbour a partiality for their own descendants. If the survivors of the deceased propitiate the disembodied soul by sacrifices, dances and worship, it will add its own power to their reserves of spiritual and physical energy. It will help them on the battlefields, protect them, their flocks and crops.¹² This kind of belief is held even today by certain tribal people and is the basis of ancestor worship. Tribes in Ghana, Nigeria, South Sea Islands and red Indians in South America practise a particular form of ancestor worship¹³ in which the souls of the dead are symbolized by baked clay dolls. In India, Brahmins worship their *pithrus* (forefathers) by paying homage to three living Brahmins on the death anniversary of the parents or grandparents. They feed the trio as a symbolic means of appeasing the souls of the dearly departed.¹⁴

Before the dawn of civilization, there were men in the stage of lower savagery who believed that their progenitor was an animal¹⁵. This belief led to a train of rituals, customs and taboos. At a higher stage of social evolution, the animal became a mere symbol and a name¹⁶. They began believing that the ancestors were after all humans whose souls could invest them with strength and power¹⁷. Faith in ancestral souls and their power has been noticed by anthropologists in all parts of the world.

Soul Power

Tribal law generally forbids hurting or killing a member of one's own tribe but not the aliens. One also comes across tribes which believe that if they kill an alien and perform for him all the funeral rites that are due to a parent, the new soul becomes an 'adopted' ancestor. It joins the company of forebears and augments the power potential¹⁸. Such beliefs are prevalent among certain clans of Nagas, the head-hunters of Sarawak and the Hottentots of Africa¹⁹. The prestige of a man in the head-hunting tribes is proportional to the number of souls he has added to the ancestral soul-army. Even after societies outgrew the tribal organization many faiths and beliefs which originated in tribal life still lingered on for many centuries. Herostone rituals indicate a similar belief that the soul to which worship is made augments the tribe's might against enemies. The rituals were meant not only to reinforce the defensive capacity, but also to enlist soul-power to ensure that their crops and animals grew and multiplied without let or hindrance.

In AD seventh and eighth centuries the villagers used to donate lands in the name of the herostones. The income from this land was used to defray the expenses of festivals and celebrations. One such record of land gift speaks of the stone as a soul (*shē*). It is obvious that the stone was believed to be the abode of a soul or the soul itself.

There are noticeable changes in the belief and thought regarding heroes' souls. The early stones of Chengam have only one horizontal panel in which the hero is represented in a wounded state with arrows penetrating his chest. This is a realistic representation of the prowess of the folk hero

whose soul must be worshipped to transform it into a beneficial spirit. This straightforward concept was modified by other influences.

Higher Heavens

The belief of the elite sections of society that the fallen heroes are welcomed into a special world of glory found expression in the later Chengam herostones. This mingling of the two beliefs is represented in a few panels which contain two horizontal layers, one representing the simple folk belief and the other the elite belief. The lower layer represents the wounded hero and the upper layer has two goddesses standing with garlands, ready to welcome him.²⁰ This concept of a glorious hero's heaven for those fallen in battle was widespread among people passing through what may be called the heroic age. Valhalla of the Germanic peoples, Elysium of the Greeks and Veera Swarga of the Aryans and Melor Ulagu (மேலார் உலகு) of the Tamils are all heavenly homes for the heroes. This glory does not stop a hero's soul from visiting a place on earth where a monument is erected to it.

A few other herostones found in Tamil Nadu and Kerala show three horizontal layers. The first two are similar to those found in Chengam. The third layer depicts the soul of the hero standing with folded hands before the linga²¹. An image of Nandi is also found in one corner of the panel. These are indications of a new development in the belief structure regarding the final destiny of the hero-souls. The *Bhakti* movement of the Saivites overwhelmed the Tamil people from AD sixth to the eighth century. The religious faith of Saivism postulated the highest heaven, *Sivaloka* for the blessed. The heroes were naturally counted among the blessed, fit for nothing less than Sivaloka. The Melor Ulagu thus became some kind of a half-way paradise for the departed soul on its way to the highest glory and supreme bliss.

Though the destination of the heroes moved to higher levels, the living carried on their rituals and ceremonies before the herostones with the purpose of obtaining material benefits here, of the earth, earthy.

¹ R Nagaswamy, *Chengam Nadukarkal*, Department of Archaeology, Madras. This book contains texts of about 60 inscriptions on herostones discovered in Chengam taluk. Nagaswamy, Director of the Department of Archaeology, Madras informed me that 126 herostones have so far been discovered in the Chengam taluk.

² *Kavalaiyakal* (கவலையகல்).

³ *Kadavul eluthia kal* (கடவுள் எழுதிய கல்).

⁴ *Puram* 231.

⁵ *Puram* 243.

⁶ This poem mentions the herostone erected to the memory of Athiaman. The ritual of feeding a spirit is also mentioned.

⁷ *Aarachi* Vol I No, 2 p 190.

⁸ Sadasivam Pillai, "Chera Nadum Cen Tamilum", *Travancore Manual*. A photograph of the herostone is printed at Nagercoil.

⁹ Found in many inscriptions appearing in *Chengam Nedukarkal*, *op.cit.*

- ¹⁰ J G Frazer, *Golden Bough*, (Abridged Volume), Chapter on "Division of Souls in Folktales".
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*, Chapter on "Ghosts and Disembodied Souls."
- ¹³ *Myths of Africa*, Chapter on "Ancestor Worship and Head-hunting" Hamelyn Mythology Series, U S A.
- ¹⁴ Personal observation of Brahmin ritual.
- ¹⁵ Animal and plant totems.
- ¹⁶ This is due to partial or complete transformation from the rise of anthropomorphism in every culture. Examples can be found in Aryan, Egyptian and South American civilizations.
- ¹⁷ J G Frazer, *op. cit.*, Chapter on "Temporary Gods".
- ¹⁸ The beliefs underlying head-hunting is found in ethnological studies on Angami Nagas and Sarawaks.
- ¹⁹ *Myths of Africa, op. cit.*
- ²⁰ The pictures on Pulappalli herostones and those on a few Chengam stones have been compared.
- ²¹ Pictures on Pulappalli herostones available with M G S Narayanan, Head of the department of history, Calicut University.

Report

Student Movement at Jawaharlal Nehru University

Prakash Karat

THE RECENT closure of Jawaharlal Nehru University, followed by the determined and successful bid by students to keep it open has attracted comment in newspapers and journals uniformly hostile to the students' union and its leaders who belong to the Students' Federation of India (SFI). This is a report on the background to recent developments and the role of the students' union.

In *Social Scientist* 14 (September 1973) VC Koshy wrote an *exposé* on the 'JNU model' which the Government of India exhibits as an example for higher education to emulate and the totally erroneous concept that such 'model centres' can bring about change in the educational system. The campus unit of the SFI since 1971 has been concentrating on breaking down the elitist structure of the university and on foiling the designs of the official planners. Rather than allow the university to become a privileged preserve of upper class students behind the facade of promoting "national integration, secularism, democracy and social justice", the SFI started with the founding of a democratic students' union in 1971; since then all the struggles launched by the union (the SFI having been its dominant section from the beginning) were principally directed at thwarting the ruling class attempts to fashion JNU into an ideological centre for propagation of the Congress brand of pseudo-radicalism.

From the general nature of the teaching staff and personnel chosen to man JNU, the tasks of the university become all too clear: to provide the faculty a radical facade, there is a liberal sprinkling of Right Communist (CPI) and Congress 'Left' brand of academics;¹ a substantial number of faculty members, the conservative and careerist types, are willing to undertake anything required of them by the government and the ruling party in order to maintain their privileges. Three of them willingly undertook the Task Force study for the Home Ministry on how to 'modernize' the police forces in the country.² Many are regular purveyors of government propaganda through radio, television and the press.³ It is therefore not surprising that some JNU academics and senior government officials have come to

look upon the university as the government's 'Think Tank'.

More sinister is the gradual absorption into JNU of defence institutions. In the last two years the National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla and the Army Cadet College, Poona have been 'recognized' by JNU for the purpose of awarding degrees. There is still a proposal pending to affiliate Defence Research Laboratories with JNU. The most disturbing aspect of this relationship is that with no worthwhile academic or administrative control it is being used merely as a means of strengthening these establishments without refashioning them on democratic lines. The link-up becomes clearer when we consider the background of the present vice-chancellor who assumed office in July 1974: a former director-general of the Research and Development Organization of the Ministry of Defence,⁴ he is head of the Indian Academy of the Indo-US Joint Sub-commission on Science and Technology which was set up as a sequel to the Kissinger visit.⁵

Past Struggles

The SFI unit and the union, taking all this into account, have in the past four years worked out an all-embracing strategy which combines the task of building a powerful democratic student movement on the campus with challenging the bourgeois-landlord policies in higher education embodied in the whole philosophy underlying the JNU structure. It began with the struggle to broaden the social base of the university by getting more students admitted from exploited socio-economic backgrounds so that the resources are not spent only on a tiny minority drawn from Delhi's bureaucratic-upper classes. In fact, they dominated the admissions in 1971, but by the struggles of the union in 1972-73, an admission policy was worked out (the basic formula having been drawn up by the SFI leadership in the union) which ensures weightages for students from poorer backgrounds and backward regions. In this connection, the union faced stiff opposition from many members of the faculty on the question of student-to-staff ratio which had to be raised.⁶ The final touch was given to this policy in 1974 when the Academic Council approved the union president's resolution for reservation of 20 per cent seats for students from the scheduled castes and tribes.⁷ It is only the determined and persistent struggle of the SFI through the union which led to an admission policy which does not stress on abstract merit as they still do in similar institutions.

The SFI and the union have also concerned themselves with providing the economic framework to sustain this new pattern of admissions. The union has taken a firm stand that JNU does not require additional financial resources: what is required is a more equitable allocation of resources within the university. For instance, to provide for a student with a parental income below Rs 500, the union demanded reduced room rent, monthly mess rate at Rs 100 and abolition of tuition fees for scholarshipholders. All three were accomplished last year so that on a Rs 110 monthly scholarship an MA student would have just enough for board and lodging.⁸

Apart from economic demands, the SFI decided to tackle the existing academic structure. In the last two union elections it mounted a two-pronged campaign: firstly to create a machinery to safeguard students from academic victimization and secondly to initiate a campaign for reform in the academic courses offered. The evaluation for MA students is completely internal based on the semester system transplanted uncritically from American or certain British universities like Sussex. Once a teacher of an academic course marks the student's paper, there is no appeal against the grade given. There is nothing in the statutes, ordinances or rules governing academic procedures which gives the student the elementary safeguard of appealing against his grades to an authority outside the purview of the Centre (Department) in which he is studying. The union therefore formulated the demand that a student must have the right of appeal to a body to be formed at the university level. This would require an amendment of the university statutes. If the body felt there is a *prima facie* case to inquire into the matter, it would be empowered to constitute an expert body of academics (no students) to re-evaluate the paper. The University Grants Commission has also recommended the setting up of a similar committee to look into student complaints.⁹ Similarly in the case of academic disputes for research students (on choice of topics, disagreement with supervisors and so on) the same right of appeal would apply.

Present Agitation

Another demand which followed from the previous year's struggle was to maintain the Rs 100 rate for hostel messes. The agreement with last year's union on a menu offered by the university has now been sabotaged by the administration by raising the cost of their own menu (offered for Rs 100 in March 1974) to Rs 147. The union was negotiating for a compromise menu which would satisfy both sides. This was not just a question of good food but of an infrastructure to enable poorer students to study in a residential university where 95 per cent of more than 600 students in residence come from different parts of the country.

Failure to settle the two demands led to the month-long agitation which culminated in paralysing the administrative building on 7 April. The vice-chancellor in a premeditated move immediately closed the university *sine die*. The students were ordered to vacate the hostels and telegrams sent to their parents. The students unitedly decided to defy the orders and refused to quit the campus. Under the union council's instructions students took over the library, prevented its closure and kept it running 24 hours of the day till the closure was lifted on the 17th. Similarly student teams took over the management of the three hostel messes and supplied food to the students. As a result the authorities' calculation that the struggle would fizzle out was upset.

From 7 to 13 April, students under the leadership of the union showed convincingly to the public and the government that they would

not be cowed down by threats. The SFI unit condemned the closure as a politically motivated move to suppress the students' union. It cited the meeting of some JNU teachers, along with Delhi University teachers, with the Prime Minister in February and the meeting of 23 vice-chancellors in Delhi in March (to condemn 'fascism' and declare support for the ruling party) as factors which contributed to the decision to close down JNU. The closure was also striking proof that under the leadership of the democratic movement it is not the students who disrupt academic life. Despite the strenuous efforts of the vice-chancellor and the government, students kept academic life going and maintained peace on the campus. Well-attended classes in various subjects were conducted by senior students. The main focus of the struggle became the demand for a statutory body to safeguard students' democratic rights. Not surprisingly, a section of teachers opposed the demand and prevented a settlement. Various specious arguments were put forward.¹⁰

Academic Empirebuilders

What has developed in JNU is a chain of Centres (departments) which are trying to be autonomous, endowing the senior faculty with wide-ranging powers. This has been taken to its logical absurdity in a situation where the equivalence of grades given by each Centre also varies.¹¹ While this is very convenient for senior professors to build self-contained empires, it poses a serious threat to the academic rights of students and scholars. It has been the experience in the university that senior professors develop not only vested interests in these Centres but use them as bases for extra-campus activities. It is common in JNU for a professor to be simultaneously holding manifold posts and sinecures in government and privately sponsored organizations.

While vice-chancellor B D Nag Chaudhuri is too busy to be a full-time employee of the university (he is also foreign secretary, National Science Academy; director, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., Bangalore; head, Indian delegation, Indo-US Joint Subcommission on Science and Technology; and member, Indian team of the Indo-US Joint Subcommission on Education and Culture) the same multi-job pattern is repeated further down the line among all the senior academics of JNU.

For example, Rasheeduddin Khan, professor, Centre of Political Studies, is a member of the following bodies: Rajya Sabha; Indian Council of Social Science Research; Indo-US Joint Subcommission on Education and Culture; Board of South and West Asian Centre for Friends World Institute (of USA) Bangalore since 1967; American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad; and Executive Committee of the Institute of Asian Studies since 1965. He has additional onerous tasks on the boards of studies, selection commissions and examination committees of 26 Indian universities.

The JNU academics are faced with such versatile and strenuous jobs of Indo-US cooperation (through CIA-sponsored agencies like Friends

World Institute), Indo-Soviet cooperation, planning and execution of government's educational policies that they have hardly the time to consider the academic needs of their own students, leave alone the outrageous demands for the right of re-evaluation. There is nothing to check the academic-political activities of professors which are often at the cost of their academic commitment to JNU.¹² Many of them, flaunting the progressive label, are opposed even to the minimum right of students for re-evaluation if prima facie grounds are proved.

When some JNU teachers are so involved in planning and executing American and governmental policies there is legitimate fear that political and academic victimization will ensue when the democratic student movement on the campus increasingly fights for a better education which in essence requires confronting and exposing the class policies in education. Instances of victimization have already taken place, the best example being the Deshpande case.¹³ The bias in JNU is however deeper and more subtle. Behind all the verbiage churned out in the University Act on its policy and aims regarding social justice and commitment, university academic programmes essentially serve the interests of the ruling classes. A glaring case is the School of International Studies which was financed from American sources (Asia, Rockefeller and Ford Foundations being its distinguished midwives).¹⁴

Fight for Safeguards

In the Centre for South East Asian Studies, work on countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia is encouraged while Vietnam, Cambodia, North Korea or Laos is firmly overlooked. The need for safeguard arises when a student wants to work, for example, on national liberation movements in Indochina, as he is denied financial assistance, supervisors and other facilities. Similarly in the School of Social Sciences, the centres dealing with political studies and sociology purvey American imperialist theories based on the 'development' models of Talcott Parsons et al. Expansion of the university—two new schools coming up are for computer sciences and environmental and theoretical sciences—also reflect the interlocking of Indian higher education with the needs of advanced Western countries.¹⁵ The necessity to fight this reactionary ideology is the primary duty of all democratic students and teachers. It is to stop them that some teachers cling to their 'academic preserves' without being answerable to any authority outside their own centres.

The SFI all over the country has taken the stand that in universities where either internal or external assessment prevails, re-evaluation should be done by an expert and in the presence of a representative of the student. The examination scripts graded immediately before and after the disputed script should be checked for comparison. Therefore in JNU where academics are now free to decide everything concerning a student—academic quality, eligibility for scholarships and so on—the limited safeguard is a just demand to be fought for determinedly.

Motivated reports have appeared in many newspapers and periodicals which slander the union and the democratic forces on the campus. The main theme of these reports is that the pampered and elitist JNU students are making absurd radical demands like wanting to "participate in evaluation" and "luxurious food which only 3 per cent of the Indian population can afford to eat". While these correspondents have been thoroughly briefed by the university, it is noteworthy that the pro-CPI lobby has also chimed in with its own version. For instance the *Patriot* and *Link* have also been pouring out venom.¹⁶

Democratic Politics

Behind all this lies the frustration and annoyance of the ruling party at its inability to set up a base among the students. Having failed to penetrate the student movement it is now resorting to slander campaigns. By the highly successful struggles led by the union since 1972 (to fashion a new admissions policy and increase the ratio of students to lecturers; representation in all decision-making bodies; and to acquire economic benefits for poorer students). The democratic student movement struck roots within the campus, keeping out reactionary forces (like NSUI and ABVP) from the students' union. For the last four years none of these forces has ventured into the open as an organized group. They have taken refuge in the conglomeration known as Free Thinkers. Disappointed at this turn of events, attempts are being made to besmirch the reputation of the JNU students and the SFI-led union, because of the democratic politics there is no eve-teasing on the campus: healthy relations have developed between men and women students. Unlike at other elitist institutions, drugs or other symbols of western degenerate culture have no attraction for the overwhelming majority of students.¹⁷

The one predominant concern for the vast majority is to identify with, and participate in, the general democratic movement of the working class and other sections. JNU students along with the karamcharis have, despite their numerical inferiority, made valuable contributions to all the working class and democratic struggles in the Delhi area.¹⁸ The Central government and the university authorities imagined that gleefully lapping up the fringe benefits, students would join the extravaganza of making JNU an educational 'showpiece'. The students have done exactly the opposite. They have used every opportunity to challenge the government's educational policies, and to defend democratic rights. At the 1973 university convocation, the union president in his address condemned the rigging of elections in West Bengal and the unleashing of semi-fascist terror on the democratic movement and the educational institutions there. Such activities obviously do not endear the JNU students to the agents of the ruling party and the monopoly press.

As far as the SFI and the union are concerned, their perspective is clear. They have no interest whatsoever in perpetuating the existing structure of the university. Step by step they fought for and brought about

changes in the university's undemocratic setup and policies. They have built up a strong democratic movement in the course of the struggle for democratization by countering the bourgeois-landlord educational ideology propagated assiduously in Indian higher education.

- ¹ One of the deans is a member of the CPI; another dean and professor is a Congress-nominated Rajya Sabha member.
- ² Three of the four members of the Task Force were: Yogendra Singh, T K Oommen and Imtiaz Ahmed (all of JNU). The fourth was a deputy commissioner of police. The report is entitled "Emerging Social Processes and Patterns in India and Their Implications for Police Training", A Report of the Task Force, Committee on Police Training, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1972. One of the recommendations in this report is "Maybe there is a need for a special cadre of police officials to deal with students." (p 54)
- ³ Roughly 16 per cent of the bookings of participants in the 'Spotlight' programme of AIR who earned the maximum fee of Rs 100 between 1 December 1970 and 30 November 1973 came from JNU. (Answer to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No 4503)
- ⁴ Attention should be drawn here to the statement of the Minister of Defence: "A number of projects (of the Research and Development Organization) have been farmed out to ... universities and other scientific institutions with a view to develop the capability in these institutions for taking up Defence-oriented research..." (Reply to starred question No 247 answered in Lok Sabha on 8 March 1973). Obviously JNU is one such university with its developing School of Life Sciences (dealing with biological and chemical sciences), computer sciences etc, ideal for this type of research.
- ⁵ See *Patriot* of 9 April 1975 for report to the effect that the government has relaxed the ban imposed in June 1972 on financing of research schemes from PL-480 funds in the fields of agriculture, education, health and family planning. These are the projects cleared by the Indo-US Commission talks and the leading initiative in defreezing PL-480 funds has been taken by vice-chancellor Nag Chaudhuri.
- ⁶ Staff-to-student ratio was on an average of 1:5 in 1973, but thanks to the union's fight for increased admissions it averages around 1:10 now.
- ⁷ Some of the academic council members like Bipan Chandra of the history faculty tried their best to block this resolution on the plea that this would not help the really deserving SC/ST candidates and that indiscriminate entry would lower academic standards.
- ⁸ The struggle to accomplish this was conducted by the students in February-March 1973 which included *dharnas*, demonstrations and a one-day strike.
- ⁹ "Examination Report, A Plan of Action", University Grants Commission, 1973, pp 11.
- ¹⁰ One of the common arguments is that this right of appeal would be used by the authorities to muzzle teachers or a hostile students' union. It is however conveniently forgotten that students would not participate in the re-evaluation process. Further, another argument put forward is that this would be used against 'leftist teachers' in the future by a right-wing students' union. This boils down to the point that to safeguard the rights of 'leftist teachers' the democratic rights of all students must be denied.
- ¹¹ For instance in the grades given to MA students graduating in 1974 it was found that an A grade in the Centre of Political Studies when converted to equivalent percentage was 3 to 4 marks less than in other centres.
- ¹² The union was forced to raise this matter in March 1974 when the union president placed a resolution in the academic council to the effect that JNU academics must fulfil their primary commitment to the academic work within the university.
- ¹³ G P Deshpande, lecturer in East Asian studies in the School of International Studies

submitted his doctoral thesis on China's foreign policy with reference to national liberation struggles. This thesis was approved by his examiners but in the *viva voce* conducted among others by a Joint Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, Paranjpe, it was rejected on the latter's insistence. The students' union and the student members the academic council issued a statement detailing the irregular procedure involved in the rejection and the Committee of Advanced Studies and Research of the School finally approved the awarding of the doctorate.

- ¹⁴ The SFI unit in JNU has prepared a full paper on this school but for reasons of space it cannot be utilized in this article.
- ¹⁵ The university at present is interested in subjects like 'pollution' and the environment, which are the concern of advanced capitalist countries. By concentrating on these areas, the university hopes to get sufficient foreign money to sustain its programmes.
- ¹⁶ For typical press reports and commentaries, see *Economic Times*, 3 May 1975: "JNU Sectarian Radicalism"; *Hindustan Times*, 5 May 1975: "JNU Doomed by Elite Radicalism"; *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26 April 1975: "Jawaharlal Nehru University: Bread, Butter, and Jam Stir". See also *Link*, 20 April 1975 for article supporting the vice-chancellor. *Patriot*, dated 11 April reported that "a group of extremists have taken control of JNU campus in south Delhi and removed certain documents from the office of the vice-chancellor... for political blackmail". The report was subsequently denied both by the registrar and the vice-chancellor in the press.
- ¹⁷ See *Current* first issue of May 1975 for a particularly slanderous report that students are carriers of drugs and indulge in sexual orgies!
- ¹⁸ In 1974 the students and karamcharis of JNU participated in the two bandhs called in May by the trade unions, the second one in support of striking railway workers. The university was closed by decision of the general bodies of students and karamcharis. Moreover over Rs 500 was collected by the students in aid of the railway workers on the campus. Over Rs 1000 was contributed by the SFI unit in 1974 to working-class struggle apart from squad work in colonies and factories.

NOTE

Transnational Monopolies

A GROUP of experts appointed at the instance of the 53rd Session of the UN Economic and Social Council came out with a report on international corporations and their impact on developing countries and international relations. The economists in this country will do well to study this report instead of hawking around remedies for all ills in the national and international economies.

One of the most characteristic phenomena in the world capitalist economy of recent years has been the formation and expansion of international capitalist monopolies. With their vast resources, these huge concerns play an increasing role in both the economic and political life of the developing countries. The Chilean episode has focused attention on the political role. The ECOSOC report includes analysis of serious economic and social consequences and other factors influencing present-day internationalization of economic life.

This subject is dealt with in detail: origin of supranational monopolies; modifications that the scientific and technological revolution has injected into the forms and methods of their activities; growth of state monopoly capital; and the role played by these monopolies in aggravating the contradictions of imperialism. The experts devote much of their attention to the new phenomena in the contemporary process of concentration: the scale of concentration (500 corporations account for nearly half of the industrial output of the developed capitalist world); the factors intensifying concentration; and the characteristics of this process in the USA, western Europe and Japan.

The salient features of the mounting concentration in all the industrial capitalist countries, according to the group are: swift growth of the average size of the mammoth concerns, replacement of the single-stage pre-monopoly capitalist forms of concentration of production by multi-stage economic formations, extension of the process of concentration beyond the limits of individual industries and countries, and the development of concealed forms of concentration under which small business is drawn into the orbit of the big entrepreneurs, while legally retaining independence.

The report divides the trusts and concerns operating on a world

scale into two main groups. The first group of transnationals consists of trusts and concerns with overseas assets. While remaining national in respect of their capital, they become international in relation to their sphere of operation. Examples are the US Standard Oil of New Jersey (whose overseas sales constitute 68 per cent of its total volume of sales, and which operates subsidiaries in 60 countries), International Telephone and Telegraph (overseas sales—47 per cent of the total and subsidiaries in 60 countries) and United Shoe Machinery (overseas sales—54 per cent of the total and subsidiaries in 25 countries). Of the west European transnational monopolies the largest include British Petroleum and Imperial Chemicals, the West German Volkswagen, Siemens and Hoechst, the Italian Montedison, the Swiss Nestlé, the French Renault and Compagnie Francaise de Petrole.

The second group of international trusts belongs to capitalists not of one but of two or more countries. Their share capital is spread over several countries and the board of directors is multinational. Such, for example, are the Anglo-Dutch chemical and food concern Unilever, which owns shares in 600 firms in 50 capitalist countries, and Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell which controls over 500 firms in various parts of the world. Of the international trusts and corporations formed after the Second World War mention should be made of the West German-Belgian Agfa Gevaert photochemicals trust, the Anglo-Italian Dunlop-Pirelli rubber technical concern, West German-Dutch FFW-Fokker aircraft and Franco-Italian Fiat-Citroen automobile corporations.

Levers of Neocolonialism

The growing importance of the transnational and international trusts and concerns in the world capitalist economy is reflected in the rapid growth of the volume of "international" production, measured in terms of the turnover of enterprises controlled by foreign capital. This output is increasing at an annual average rate of 10 per cent, which is approximately double the growth rate of production in the capitalist countries. In the mid-1960s the volume of such production according to some estimates totalled more than \$180,000 million, of which \$110,000 million were accounted for by US corporations, \$63,000 million by west European, \$6,500 million by Canadian and about \$2,000 by Japanese concerns.

While formally abiding by the laws of the countries where their enterprises operate, the international corporations reserve to themselves the right to decide arbitrarily questions such as a change in the volume of output, the building of new enterprises or closing down of those in operation, specialization in production, and the choice of suppliers and buyers. All these factors exercise a substantial influence on the general state of the economy of the country where international monopolies operate, especially in such areas as employment, balance of payments, volume and orientation of foreign trade, and so on. This can be easily observed by examination of the operations of the subsidiaries of US transnational monopolies in

Britain, which through their currency policy have aggravated its economic difficulties at the height of the sterling crisis.

Turning to the impact of foreign monopoly capital on the economies of developing countries, the report throws a smokescreen around the true nature of the new, modern form of colonialism termed "neo-colonialism", and to present certain of the factors in the most favourable light, to make it acceptable to the developing countries.

While neocolonialism has a number of economic levers at its disposal, exceptionally important among these are direct investments like mines, petroleum fields, factories, commercial and banking establishments or plantations owned by foreign monopolies in other countries, chiefly in former colonies and dependencies of the imperialist countries. Direct investment offers foreign capital an incomparable opportunity for broad penetration into economies of relatively underdeveloped countries and often lead to the domination of other countries by the big foreign monopolies. This form of monopoly capital over entire branches of the developing countries' economies continues at present.

Essentially, the report points out that in the capitalist world the monopolies industrial and banking, national, transnational, and international, are becoming one of the most important driving forces of integration. Certain Western economists keep insisting that private investments abroad are the most important types of capital export and should so be regarded, and that the government's function is primarily to aid the activities of private concerns in foreign lands. Direct private foreign investment has been the target of severe criticism in virtually all of the poorer developing countries during the postwar period, and has been identified with colonialism and "Yankee" or Western imperialism. It has also come under increasing attack from both official and unofficial quarters in these countries.

Capital Export for Development ?

Nowadays, some economists are busy advertising the idea that foreign investments supply the developing countries with funds to finance their economic development and increase their savings; actively aid the creation of new productive facilities and enterprises in these countries; and thus lead to the speedy overcoming of their economic backwardness.

How much truth, to begin with, is there in the allegation that the export of capital by the industrial capitalist states finances the economic development of the underdeveloped countries? Divorced from any philanthropic considerations, the monopolies invest money abroad exclusively for the sake of profits, and even if a share of these profits is generally used to increase such foreign investments (reinvested, in other words), the final aim is to transfer such profits from foreign investments to the lending country and let them accumulate there. As a result, the flow of capital from the lending states to the economically underdeveloped countries soon releases a powerful counterflow of profits earned in the latter.

Another fact will help us gain a better idea of the actual scale on which the economically underdeveloped countries are being plundered by means of capital exports. The growth of foreign investments in any given country strengthening, as it does, the position of the multi-monopolies and increasing their profits, does not in general involve any actual inflow of new capital from abroad, inasmuch as it is financed by profits earned in the country in question.

As a result of the bourgeois state undertaking considerable expansion of state monopoly control and management of the national economy, and the increased range of means and methods employed to that end, there has been a notable increase in the role of the state in shaping general demand within the imperialist countries, basic national proportions, internal structure of various industries, inter-sectoral proportions and the efficacy and growth rates of the economy.

What then is the relationship in between the processes of state monopoly control of internal economic life and internationalization of production and capital, the international activities of the monopolies and the tendency towards economic integration? The role of the bourgeois state in the development of the processes of integration has, in fact, been contradictory. This question is omitted by the group of experts.

State in Monopoly Capitalism

The state promotes the development of economic exchange between the highly developed countries, the convergence of their national economy and the deepening of the division of labour between them. In other words, *the state has acted as a stimulus to integration*, which has been expressed in practice in several ways.

As a result of the larger-scale and increasingly complex nature of the external operations, the growing need to participate in international exchange and the sharpness of competitive struggle on the world capitalist market (due to the spasmodic development of different enterprises, companies and countries) monopoly capital has had to seek considerably more extensive state support (direct and indirect) for its external economic activity than had hitherto been the case. Moreover, the fact that the state had powerful means of economic control at its disposal enabled the monopoly bourgeoisie to transfer to state offices many of the functions that had formerly been performed by private companies, thus creating the conditions for a considerable increase in state intervention in the external economic sphere.

After analyzing the role played by the international monopolies in exacerbating the contradictions of imperialism today, the authors of the report draw an important conclusion: the intensification of the role played by the international monopolies in the world capitalist economy constitutes striking proof and is the direct result of gigantic socialization of modern productive forces. The conflict between the growing requirements of the productive forces and the obsolete and outmoded relations of

production of the capitalist system is much more acute today than ever before. In this lie the objective preconditions for the further growth and strengthening of the anti-monopoly forces which, led by the working class, are called upon to effect the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism.

It is evident that since the ecosoc report is a relatively small publication and the subject is so vast that the authors have omitted some aspects of the emergence and operation of international monopolies. In the section dealing with the concentration and centralization of capital and production they briefly mention the influence of bank capital on the development of the international industrial corporations. Yet the merging of international banks and industrial monopolies has led to the international financial groups.

Wider Still and Wider

The concentration of capital and production in metropolitan countries has been steeply intensified in recent years, and this process has acquired qualitatively new features. At the same time, corporations are acquiring an international structure, across national borders. These centres of international capital and their activities are exerting a considerable influence on the economic and social life of people in these states. Annual investments in fixed capital and equipment made by foreign subsidiaries of US monopolies in the second half of the 1960s fluctuated from \$ 9,000 million to \$ 13,000 million annually and in 1970 were expected to grow to more than \$ 15,000 million.

The expansion of international monopolies and the mounting export of capital can also be illustrated by a mass of data. By 1967 the assets of international conglomerates beyond the borders of countries where their main companies are located, reached \$ 89,000 million. The United States accounted for 60 per cent of this sum (\$ 54,000 million) Canada 4 per cent (\$ 3,300 million) and Japan slightly more than 1 per cent (\$ 1,000 million). Western Europe accounted for \$ 30,000 million of the total assets, including Britain's \$ 16,000 million.

Whereas in the past, monopolies were oriented chiefly to the home market and exports (direct investments abroad were largely a means of winning export markets), the biggest monopolies have in effect transferred their production facilities abroad. The output of international companies beyond the borders of the countries where their main enterprises are located, exceeds four times the commodity exports of the United States and twice those of Britain and Switzerland. A similar picture also characterizes the situation in respect of West Germany, Italy and Japan.

The degree of internationalization of monopolies naturally differs. This applies both to the share of production abroad in gross output and also to the extent of diversification by regions and countries. On these criteria, economists usually classify monopolies as transnational,

international, multinational, and global.

Incidentally, thus far there are not many international monopolies controlled by capital originating in different countries. At present they are predominantly national companies with an international radius of action. This, however, does not preclude the rising tendency towards internationalizing both ownership of capital and control. This tendency is now revealed in two respects: first, in the establishment by the biggest monopolies of the different countries of joint affiliated companies for organization of production, the use of patents and licences and the operation of information and transport system; second, in measures resulting in the partial merging of individual units of national monopolies with corresponding units of enterprises of foreign monopolies.

As a result, new monopolies or groups of monopolies are formed, which are subordinate to the so called paternal monopoly. Cases in point are the Agfa-Gevaert, Poesch-Hoogovens, Vereinigte Flugtechnisch Werke-Fokker, and also the partial amalgamation of Dutch Philips with Italian Igris, the British Laporte Chemical Company with Belgian Solvay group and the broad cooperation of British Solvay Reed with the German Hoechst concern. Such agreements on partial merger and cooperation in western Europe have also been organized in the aircraft industry, computer industry and in the construction of reactors. They are stimulated to a considerable extent and degree by the joint production of arms within NATO.

Factors behind Internationalization

The trend towards internationalization of monopolies is dictated by the sharper struggle between US, west European and Japanese financial groups for dominant positions in sectors which are of decisive significance in scientific and technological revolution. The struggle is waged above all through the export of capital taking the form of direct investments: the buying up of enterprises, the creation of an international system of participation and the construction of new enterprises are gaining control over decisive sectors of production, productive capacity, markets for goods, and technological development in industrial home countries.

The scientific and technological revolution demands diversification, specialization, cooperation, integration and concentration of production which go beyond the limits of national economies. These call for greater centralization in the making of decisions concerning production, distribution and the use of sources of accumulation on an international and regional scale: also the removal of national differences in the levels of development and structural disproportions. Monopoly capital, while developing science and technology on a large scale, tries to preserve its rule and balance of power between the two world social systems.

The new stage in international monopolization is designed to ensure higher economic efficiency and bigger profits for the monopolies. They rely on the economic, political and military strength of their states. Through

personal and financial ties, the international monopolies have become most intimately intertwined with the state machinery. It is their interests that above all determine the action of the states. These monopolies are centres of the war economy and at the same time the major instruments of military policies. They embody a stage of concentration and centralization without which it would be impossible to directly involve governments in economic activity on a national or international scale. It is the international monopolies which inspire and direct the policies of the states in relation to developing countries.

The process of intertwining the monopolies of west European countries, especially EEC members, is developing more rapidly than elsewhere, with the expansion of the Common Market. Mergers have substantially narrowed the wide gap between the west European and US monopolies in definite branches of the chemical, engineering and food industries.

Third World Predicament

The activity of international monopolies is particularly dangerous for developing countries. It not only widens the gap in development levels between them and the industrialized countries, but also imperils the political and economic independence of young states. The ideologists of monopolies claim that the investments in developing countries exert a "beneficial" impact, extol foreign exchange receipts, the transfer of technological know-how, training of personnel and aid in building national enterprises. The realities, however, are quite different as the ECOSOC report makes abundantly clear.

The developing countries are currently facing important and complicated policy problems in regard to foreign capital in general and more particularly direct capital investments by foreign monopolies. Against a background dominated by external contradictions with imperialism, class struggle at home, retarded economic development and snail-like social progress, these assume vital importance.

The Rockefeller Memorandum—a report on the US neocolonialist programme for Latin America, submitted to the US government in February 1963 by a number of major American monopolies—calls for the creation in Latin America of conditions favourable for the activities of private capital. Whatever makes such conditions "favourable" for the imperialists happen to work against the national interests of the countries concerned. The progressive, patriotic forces of the Third World which are waging a struggle to end the domination of foreign, particularly American, monopolies sharply restrict the "freedom of action" of foreign capital. For they demand the complete eradication of foreign capital, the expulsion of foreign monopolies, and the creation of national industry. In refutation of the standard argument offered by the Western theoreticians and those in the liberated countries who share their views in favour of inviting foreign capital (chiefly in the form of direct investments) for lack of domestic

funds for economic development, it is pointed out that the necessary resources can and must be raised first of all internally, through such progressive action as nationalization of foreign companies; comprehensive agrarian reforms which would relieve the peasantry of tremendous burden of rent paid to the landed proprietors; and introduction of fair tax on profits earned by capitalists as well as on other unearned incomes.

In attempting to study and evaluate the various ways and methods used by the developing countries in their struggle to restrict or expel foreign capital (including so radical a method as the nationalization of foreign companies down to the regimentation of various aspects of such companies' activities), it is extremely important to establish in the name of what principles, in the interests of what class, and for the achievement of what social aims this struggle is being waged.

Resistance of a Sort

Viewed objectively, this struggle is waged against the imperialists, as one of the elements of the national liberation struggle; it testifies to the waning strength of the imperialist forces and contributes to their further weakening. Nevertheless, the struggle against foreign capital differs greatly from country to country from the standpoint of its nature, continuity, means and aims. In some cases it is a component element of the struggle waged by the progressive forces to lead the country along a non-capitalist path of development, implying a most consistent policy aimed at eliminating foreign monopoly dominance and ending the exploitation of the country at their hands.

In other cases a policy of restriction and partial expulsion of foreign capital is pursued by the bourgeois governments (as in India) in order to further the development of national capitalism, based on both private and government capital. When such is the case, action to restrict foreign monopolies usually goes hand in hand with greater cooperation with the big national bourgeoisie. Such cooperation while still subject to mutual contradiction, of course, is assuming new forms in the process of its development, inasmuch as this process is now going on in politically independent countries and not in colonial possessions as before. This makes inevitably for an equivocal and inconsistent policy in regard to foreign capital.

In still other cases definite pressure on foreign capital is exerted by and in the interests of the feudal-monarchist cliques in power in certain developing countries. In such countries the ruling circles are basically hostile towards the national liberation movement, but nevertheless, strive to benefit by the general upswing of the movement in the dependent countries. More specifically, taking advantage of the situation, they present demands and exert pressure on the foreign monopolies (chiefly the petroleum concerns) in order to obtain certain concessions, priority being given to improvement of the terms of their lease agreements. While concessions of this sort help weaken the position of foreign capital and are therefore beneficial, the funds obtained in this manner are largely used to enrich the

✓ ruling clique instead of being expanded for useful purposes.

The rightful, lawful owners of the foreign monopolies' entire property are the peoples of less developed countries, who are fully entitled to take any action in regard to such property, including its nationalization or confiscation without payment of indemnity. Even such nationalization would not settle the debt that the imperialist states owe to the people of their former colonies and semi-colonies.

Politically and legally, the right of nationalization of property is based on the principles of self-determination set forth in the United Nations Charter declaring that every nation shall be free to determine its political, economic and cultural status. The principle of self-determination is inalienably associated with the right of each people to freely dispose of natural wealth and resources (a right substantiated in a special United Nations resolution), as well as with the right of sovereign states to annul unequal treaties and agreements accepted under coercion. A resolution of the Cairo Conference of Asian and African countries, held late in 1957, states that "nationalization is a lawful means and right enjoyed by every state on the basis of the principles of sovereignty".

The huge profits created by the peoples of the underdeveloped countries and expropriated by the foreign monopolies have long been far in excess of the capital invested by these monopolies. Thus it is noted that in Pakistan an American firm was shown as having exported in one year a profit six times the amount of capital invested.

State Sector Expansion

The existence and expansion of the government sector in a developing country's economy tend to restrict the operation of foreign capital, because the government sector is often granted the exclusive rights of operation in specific branches of the economy (or creating new enterprises therein). How these opportunities are used, however, depends on the general policies of the ruling circles or classes. The actual role of the government sector as a factor offsetting the role of foreign capital therefore differs from country to country. In several developing countries (Brazil, India, Ceylon) national state concerns have been created for petroleum production and refining. This measure has seriously restricted the predatory operations of foreign oil giants.

As far as India is concerned, the leading Indian capitalists are anxious to draw benefits both from the government sector and from their cooperation with the foreign monopolies. During the early years of India's independence the government sector was used as a means of restricting and partially expelling foreign monopolies in the interest of big bourgeoisie which was rapidly expanding the sphere of its entrepreneurial activities, but after a time this bourgeoisie shifted to a policy of board cooperation with the foreign monopolies which it used, incidentally, as a lever to put pressure on the government sector. The example of modern India corroborates the observation that when a former colony chooses the capitalist

path of development, the action it takes against foreign capital is usually restricted in scope and lacking in consistency. After his trip to India, D Rockefeller declared, not without reason, that he considered this country safe for American investment.

The policy of regulating the activity of foreign capital in its various phases by means of legislation has gained wide acceptance in the developing countries. Such legislation concerns primarily repatriation of profits, use of local labour, ownership of capital stock and so forth.

In line with the policy of limiting the operations of foreign private capital, mixed companies are sometimes formed, in which both foreign and domestic capital are invested. Some countries in the name of economic independence have enacted laws restricting foreign ownership of capital stock of new concerns to 49 per cent, the remaining 51 per cent to belong to domestic capital which will therefore presumably exercise control over the concern in question. Such a decree was enacted back in 1948 in India and it still remains in force, though the government has introduced a number of reservations and exceptions to this rule. Under certain circumstances, it is true, effective control over joint-stock companies can be exercised even by minority stockholders, sometimes even by those who own a very insignificant share of stock. Nevertheless, the measures described above set certain limits on the operations of foreign monopolies.

Collaboration Bait

In the less developed countries, such mixed companies are nowadays the arena of expanding cooperation and, concurrently, of a developing struggle between foreign and national capital, for while their social and class aims have much in common, each of the two sides pursues aims of its own. Foreign monopolies are taking a greater and greater interest in such companies inasmuch as they are particularly adapted to operations in the new sovereign states. From the viewpoint of monopolies and their theoreticians, such companies offer a number of advantages. Politically, foreign domination can be camouflaged under a "national" name, which will find favour with local authorities, and reduce the threat of nationalization. Also, substantial funds may be made available from local sources. Working through such mixed companies, foreign monopoly capital seeks to subjugate and exploit local capital (which is what generally happens, as in many Latin American countries) while local capital seeks to use these companies for enhancing its own position and profits.

There are rather readily observable differences in the attitude of the various bourgeois groups in the less developed countries towards foreign capital. Cooperation with foreign capital is usually undertaken by members of the big commercial and industrial bourgeoisie of the developing countries, just as the export of capital from the imperialist states is undertaken exclusively by the leading monopolies.

Many of the former maintain long-established relations with the

erstwhile colonialist companies. It is precisely this sector of the big national bourgeoisie that is actively engaged in efforts to attract foreign capital by offering it special concessions and privileges. A favourite argument is that no economic development of the less developed countries is possible without the wide participation of private foreign capital. This argument ties in neatly with the "theoretical" conjectures of the ideologists of imperialism and colonialism.

Arguing in favour of overcoming economic backwardness, these circles conceive of a development backed by private capital, national and foreign. Hence the insistent invitations to foreign monopolies to "make their contribution" to the development of the countries concerned, the privileges and inducements offered to foreign capital; and the creation of a "favourable climate" for private foreign investments.

On the other hand, despite a community of social and class aims, there exist definite economic contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and foreign capital. While under the colonial regimes the local bourgeoisie was deprived of equal rights and fair treatment, now that it has come to power it is seeking to narrow the sphere of foreign monopolies, to expand its own sphere of entrepreneurial activities, and to increase its profits. Hence the restrictions in regard to foreign capital which we have been discussing above.

For and Against

India offers an excellent illustration of this dual policy. The government began by introducing restrictions in regard to foreign capital (a ceiling on number of shares of mixed company capital stock, increased taxation, etc), but in 1958 it gave foreign capital permission to hold 51 per cent shares in a number of companies and in 1960 granted tax reductions. *The Eastern Economist*, which is the mouthpiece of the Indian monopolies, welcomed these privileges and declared with satisfaction that "the removal of these obnoxious features (meaning the annulled laws on the taxation of profits) will enable more and more foreign capital to flow into this country".

This duality is to be found in the works of our contemporary economists. L Narain, for instance, while admitting that "foreign nationals and foreign governments...try to dominate the country in which the capital is invested...try to exploit the resources of the country for their own profit and not in the interest of the country concerned", is nevertheless actively in favour of attracting foreign capital and mainly interested in direct investments.

S K Iyengar, also a spokesman for the Indian monopolies, is equally explicit in his views. "In place of the present tangle between the aggressive but inefficient public sector and the comparatively efficient but discouraged private sector", he writes, "it would be wise to allow full freedom for private enterprise to invite foreign capital for specific projects, and to work on a joint share basis".

On the other hand the late D R Gadgil was of the opinion that "dependence on foreign aid and looking to foreign investment are likely to increase the power of the large semi-monopolies' private business". Mixed companies with participation of local capital therefore act most frequently as channels through which the foreign monopolies exercise their influence to the detriment of the country's interests. It is from this angle that one should evaluate the rapid growth of mixed companies in some of the newly liberated countries. In India, for example, 24 such companies were created in 1957, 109 in 1958, 162 in 1959, 388 in 1960, 304 in 1961 and the total at the end of 1971 was 1,572 or so. While the establishment of a limit on foreign capital participation in mixed companies does restrict to a certain extent arbitrary operations of foreign monopolies, it is not a sufficiently effective means of safeguarding national interests because the local capital participating in these companies is, first and foremost, the ally of the foreign monopolies.

D L Spencer, the American economist, quite logically admits that many mixed companies in which Indian and foreign capital participate are still built on the traditional pattern of colonial domination.

Weak Links in the Chain

The petty and middle bourgeoisie in developing countries are not linked in such a manner that, far from benefiting thereby, they are forced to share some of their income with the foreign monopolies (from the sale of finished goods, purchase of equipment or raw materials, or borrowing money). For a section of big bourgeoisie, cooperation with foreign capital may be a source of profits and riches, but for the petty and middle bourgeoisie such "cooperation" generally means nothing but loss. Moreover, in the conditions of political independence in some of the former colonies, India for example, there have been coming forward elements of national bourgeoisie whose interests and profits are associated with the creation of a national industry (heavy industry and engineering included), expansion of domestic markets, and restriction of foreign competition.

These elements of national bourgeoisie therefore seek to restrict or expel the foreign monopolies, frequently lend their support to demands for nationalization—on conditions subject to discussion—of foreign enterprises, and consider that foreign aid should be made available in the form of government loans by international organizations and not in the form of private investments. This attitude is hostile to imperialism and thus in harmony, in certain respects, with the demands of the truly progressive and patriotic forces in the newly liberated countries.

The chain of events that have weakened and changed the position of foreign capital as a result of national liberation struggle carried on in the less developed countries can be easily traced in the petroleum industry, which has long been and largely remains a sphere dominated by the leading monopolies. This "petroleum imperialism" has turned many countries,

especially in the Middle East, into objects of particularly vicious exploitation and sources of fabulous profits for the international monopolies. The dominance of foreign capital in the petroleum industry came to be established mainly through the system of concessions wrenched by the imperialists from their dependencies on such terms that they could safely be called predatory.

After the Second World War, however, and especially since early 1950s, a widespread movement began in the countries where the petroleum monopolies had penetrated, for a basic revision of the entire pattern of relations with foreign capital. This movement spread, initially, throughout the Middle East. The success that crowned Egypt's efforts to nationalize the Suez Canal was of great significance for the movement, for it demonstrated to the Arab nations the truth that in present-day conditions any oppressed and exploited country could wage a successful battle for its rights with the support of the Soviet Union and the entire socialist system.

This struggle fosters a growing solidarity among the developing countries in their policy vis-a-vis the foreign petroleum monopolies. Thus the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was set up in 1960, with the participation of Arab countries, Venezuela and Indonesia and later, Nigeria. Conferences on petroleum and petroleum policies are periodically convened within the framework of the OPEC.

Contradictions, National and International

The struggle to achieve economic independence has produced, in recent years, new patterns of relationship between the new national state and foreign capital. Spokesmen for the imperialist interests have repeatedly warned that capitulation of the colonial system would lead to a breakdown of the traditional pattern of economic relations so highly valued by the industrially developed capitalist countries, who depend on their colonies for vitally-needed raw materials and foodstuffs. These warnings were intended, *inter alia*, to influence the working masses in the metropolitan countries, to win them over to the colonial policy allegedly vital for the economic status and prosperity of Great Britain, France, Belgium and other countries.

Actually, however, this thesis has always been merely one of the defensive weapons in the ideological arsenal of colonialism. The progressive elements in both the imperialist countries and the ex-colonies have time after time pointed out that the liquidation of colonial dependence would not sever the established relations, but would only change their nature. Under the colonial regime these relations were the tools of imperialist exploitation: now they are to be based on the principle of equal rights and mutual advantage. The new independent states, as well as those other countries which are seeking to develop their national economies are now fighting for a revision of their foreign economic relations along these lines.

The internationalization of production and capital is exerting a complex and extremely contradictory impact on the entire mechanism of

international relations within the world of contemporary capitalism. Stimulating the consolidation of economic ties and the acceleration of the process of intergration among capitalist countries and promoting the growth of their economic potential, the internationalization of capital simultaneously exacerbates the struggle of national financial oligarchic groups and monopoly associations controlled by them for the redivision of markets and new spheres of domination. This rivalry assumes diverse forms. On a global scale it is revealed in the clash of interests of "national imperialism" and regional imperialist groups, in contradictions between state-monopoly regulation of production within national borders on the one hand, and the internationally organized production of transnational monopolies on the other. The concrete forms and methods of the inter-imperialist struggle may change, and they do change constantly, depending on many factors, but its substance, the class content which engenders contradictions and conflicts of an economic, political and national character, remains unchanged.

G V RAO

BOOK REVIEW

Review Article

Psychology or Adaptology?

INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, A SURVEY OF RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY, Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1972, pp 454 + xxxiii, Rs 40.

CHILDREN learn by imitation. So do Indian psychologists but with one difference: while the young ones learn new things and unlearn little, the psychologists forget all about themselves in playing the sedulous apes of the West. This year when the Indian Psychological Association celebrates its golden jubilee, they are busy adapting tests and instruments, theories and models, therapies and traits: all 'phoren' and imported, even smuggled in the baggage of returnees from the United States.¹ What we fancy as Indian in this area of study is nothing more than an attempt to reconstruct psychology out of (ancient) systems of philosophy: even here most psychologists have a definite bias against *Lokayata* systems as 'they were people's systems,' not sanskritized enough to be acceptable to the *bhadra lok*.

Psychology as taught and practised in India is an imperialist legacy. Till mid-1950s it was dominated by teachers of philosophy for whom the Indian mind was not as potent as its occidental counterpart. The innovations in the methodology of psychology in the West were restricted to fashionable drawing-room discussions on Freud's sexuality or the mind-matter dualism. When the Ministry of Defence started advertising lucrative positions in the research laboratories and on service selection boards, university departments of philosophy introduced psychology courses.

The second phase in the development of psychology was inaugurated by American universities offering attractive studentships for graduate work on completion of which most of the psychologists found jobs outside India. It was then that students who could not travel abroad began doing their doctoral work here. The research guides available till early 1960s were not competent enough and would ask their students

to either take up a survey (study habits, student problems or attitudes) or to adapt a test. At the end of the course, these students hurriedly completed a thick volume (which was scarcely worth even a research note). This volume was sent to the guide's favourite examiners who would not be reluctant to recommend the awarding of a degree.

Phase Three was marked by the advent of foreign foundations, cheap editions of second-rate American books and above all, PL-480. Cheap American books were detrimental to independent thinking and writing inside the country.² American money was easily on tap for such studies as an attitudinal survey on a railway shed but not for serious theoretical research. Plenty of finance was also forthcoming for Indian professors to go on lecture tours, some of them clandestinely sponsored by the CIA, in US universities.

ICSSR Overviews the Scene

The Indian Council of Social Science Research on the recommendation of an advisory committee commissioned ten psychologists to make a review of the research done in specific areas of study. Within six months or so they were ready with the 'overviews' (as Mitra prefers to call them) and within one year more than forty psychologists were discussing these drafts. As the results clearly indicate, the overviews never seemed to have bothered to read all the relevant material. Sufficient for them were their own writings or those of their friends and whatever was ready at hand.³ After all there is a limit to the amount of material which can be located and documented within a short span of one year. Being associated with the editing of the *Indian Psychological Abstracts* which is entrusted with the publication of complete abstracts of the researches, I am in a position to estimate that not even 50 per cent of the papers listed by the overviews were available to them. The total number of write-ups listed is less than 3000 which is far short of the actual number⁴. The overviews have hardly seen a quarter of the total write-ups and they must have read through less than ten per cent. I have been told that a hundred thousand rupees were spent upto the discussion stage. Surely this money could have been put to better use for acquiring the documents for a project on the history of Indian psychology by one or two psychologists. But in a faction-ridden profession, such a thing would not have been so easy. Moreover, this would have called for reserves of patience, energy and brains. ICSSR was perhaps in a hurry. In fact a number of reviews similar to what we find in the *Survey* were already available. The question arises: was this *Survey* at all necessary?

The basic drawback lies in the very approach. It appears to be lacking in purpose since no attempt has been made to assert or construct the image and personality of Indian psychology. Rather, it is a crude exercise to review Indian studies on the lines of the American Psychological Association. When we use the outlines of the *American Psychological Abstracts* to fit into our studies, one cannot help being sceptical about such

an undertaking. The absurdity of it all is upon us when we come across statements such as, "For purpose of comparability, categorization as given in *Psychological Abstracts* published by the American Psychological Association has been followed in reviewing research in clinical psychology, *although a simplified model would have been more suitable*." or "Psychodiagnostic procedures employed are mainly *the same as developed and used in the West*". (Emphasis added).

Page after page is devoted to American writings and to the beginnings of psychology in India. One draws a blank later on when, for instance, M M Sinha writes: "III. Instincts: No significant study has been reported". "I. Neurology: No work has been reported". "IX. Genetics: No work has been reported." Because he chose to *adapt* American classification, A K P Sinha had to discuss psychiatric illness under "Performance and Job Satisfaction"! Under "Engineering Psychology" he had to be more apologetic by outlining "the type of research involved in this area". The *Survey* is full of such examples which leave the impression of absolute subservience to the West and an alarming intellectual bankruptcy.

Clinical Psychology and All That

The first trend report is on clinical psychology. How and since when has clinical psychology become a social science? Although clinical psychology is considered a discipline distinct from psychoanalysis or psychiatry, the report devotes considerable space to the history of psychoanalysis, mental hospitals and psychiatry in India. As we know, clinical psychology is not meant only for the insane after they are brought into mental hospitals. Unfortunately, even the areas suggested for research (immediate attention) are all related to etiology and not with therapy or mental hygiene. Is it being seriously suggested that therapy has always to be imported from the West?

If only Mitra could present the listings of the adaptations of tests, we would have been saved the ordeal of at least 200 pages of tiresome material because his survey is a mere description of these adaptations. Indian psychology is but adaptology.⁵ Nowhere in this thick volume can the reader find mention of any original theoretical contribution by Indians. If anything, the overviewer stops with the title and a half-sentence summary as for Udai Pareek's social change model. Kuppuswamy's books have been completely ignored. It is remarkable that the mass of studies carried out by Indians who are always indexed in the international directories of cross-cultural researchers does not even get a line.

In his review of developmental psychology Parameswaran avoids the studies in a conventional style since apparently he has almost nothing worth talking about. His last section under "Some Individual Investigations" is the only portion that has any relevance at all and it does not cover more than a page! Most studies indexed here are actually on attitude, interest, and the like.

Most of the bird's-eye-view studies have dwelt at length on such

preliminaries as definitions, history of psychology and what happens in the USA, as if they were writing notes for a classroom lecture and not for professional colleagues. Buch could play safe if he had avoided reviewing guidance and selection since a big chunk of D Sinha's industrial psychology goes under this head; but another Sinha (AKP) could well have skipped military psychology since he duplicates D Sinha. When the latter preaches about Indian socialism on page 210 he is obviously out of his depth. Looking for evidence to prop up Western hypotheses he finds it even when the results are contrary to what he should expect! There is an incredible note of self-satisfaction when he observes, "while reports show some conflicting results, there is ample evidence that they generally support Western studies..."

Shanmugam has done well to feel the need for Indian models in personality psychology but has not cared to see through the researches to think of even a modal Indian personality. Numerous studies reported as adaptation could well be used for this purpose. This study seems to share the widespread assumption that we cannot contribute anything significant. There is also a woeful lack of full utilization of research data. The results are not presented in the correct perspective and vital findings are dismissed with superficial conclusions.

Through the Glass Darkly

One cannot be sure that Rath has made a serious effort to analyze the results of social-psychological studies reviewed by him. Incomplete bibliography is combined with an off-hand superficiality. One wonders if Rath had access to all the papers indexed by him. The studies under "Cultural and Social Processes" which seem to be the mainstay of social psychological research in India do not get the attention they deserve. Caste, industrialization, independence, partition, scheduled castes and tribes, wars with neighbouring countries, all these are of immense importance and call for detailed treatment. The way Rath has dealt with these topics clearly shows that he has not gone beyond the bibliography. He has managed to review such important conceptual studies relating to psycho-social aspects of cultural relations (like cultural conflict, cultural change, trends in Indian culture, human relations and so on) in casual nonchalance. Under psycholinguistics he mentions only three papers and misses all the work done by Osgood and his colleagues, Shanmugam, Sinha, Kuppuswamy, Agrawal, Harigopal and others.

The section on "Physiological and Comparative Psychology" has little more than an inventory of publications. In view of the fact that most of the research work relates to psychopharmacological studies, one wonders if it was more appropriate to include this section under "Experimental Psychology".

A K P Sinha's "Military Psychology", as already pointed out, duplicates "Industrial Psychology". *Indian Psychological Abstracts* have rightly dealt with these two branches in one volume entitled *Industrial and*

Organizational Psychology. Many papers in the bibliography are filled with follow-up studies of certain courses, examination results, glossary and so on.

Mitra's overview on "Methodology" lacks comprehensiveness and imagination. On the whole, the *Survey* reads like a review of literature for a Master's degree dissertation. Indian psychology is adaptology and nothing more, and the ICSSR produces ample evidence to bear out this fact.

K G AGRAWAL

- ¹ Shanmugan writes: "The researches in personality are at present mainly confined to applying and verifying theories of Rosenweig, Allport, Maslow, Cattell, Eysenck and McClelland." *ICSSR Survey of Research in Psychology*, p 267.
- ² Krishnan observes, "... Indian production of books for postgraduate level in any branch of psychology is practically nil. British and American books are generally prescribed..." p 2-3.
- ³ Of the 250 doctoral theses in psychology only very few have been listed in this *Survey*.
- ⁴ An example can be cited: Mitra on page XXI mentions 525 publications in "Personality" but the actual number is 745. (See *Indian Psychological Abstracts*, 1974, Volume 3).
- ⁵ Krishnan writes, "Almost all the psychological tests used by the clinical psychologists are adaptations of those standardized in UK and USA".

COIR FOR ALL SEASONS

Coir is a miracle floorcovering. It stays cool in summer. Keeps the chill off your feet in winter. Dust slides through it. It's hard-wearing and easily cleaned. Best of all, there's a wide, wide range of colours and designs to choose from.

* Doormats * *Matting * Mourzouks *

* Pile Carpets *

Rubberised Coir Cushioning *

Buy Coir—It's such a clever choice

For your requirements

Please contact :

SECRETARY, COIR BOARD, COCHIN—682016 (KERALA)

Or

VISIT ANY OF OUR SHOWROOMS AND SALES DEPOTS AT :

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1. <i>New Delhi :</i> | 16A, Asaf Ali Road. | (Tel: No. 271388) |
| 2. <i>Bombay :</i> | 5, Stadium House,
Churchgate. | (Tel: No. 295212) |
| 3. <i>Calcutta :</i> | 22, Loudon Street. | (Tel: No. 445287) |
| 4. <i>Bangalore :</i> | 1-A, Mahatma Gandhi Road. | (Tel: No. 51216) |
| 5. <i>Madras :</i> | 1/155, Mount Road. | (Tel: No. 85787) |
| 6. <i>Cochin :</i> | Karuna, M.G. Road,
Opp: Kavitha Theatre | (Tel: No. 34277) |
| 7. <i>Chandigarh :</i> | S.C.O. 85, Sector 17-C | (Tel: No. 25753) |
| 8. <i>Bhubaneswar :</i> | No. 17, Janpath,
Bapujee Nagar. | (Tel: No. 50944) |
| 9. <i>Madurai :</i> | 52, East Veli Street,
Near Chinthamani Talkies. | (Tel: No. 25505) |
| 10. <i>Patna :</i> | Biscomaun Bhavan,
West Lawn | |

Or

ANY OF OUR ACCREDITED DEALERS.

FOR YOUR REQUIREMENTS AT COMPANY'S
LISTED PRICE OF

Decorative Tea-sets and Dinner-sets, Comfortable
Foam Mattresses and Pillows,
Quality Toilet and Washing Soaps,
Cycle Tyres and Rims and Various Types of Rubber
Sheetings and Hoses,

STEP IN AND MAKE YOUR SELECTION

AT

The Emporium, Shanti Nagar, Government
Press Road, Trivandrum-1 Phone No. 2157
A Unit of

Kerala State Industrial Enterprises Limited, Trivandrum.

INDUSTRY for THE INDUSTRIES

The TCC is industry for industries. This may seem an exaggeration. Nevertheless it is a fact. Can modern life be imagined without Soap, Rayons, Paper, Vana-pathi, Fertilisers, Aluminium, Petrol, Paint, Synthetic Fibres, Leather, Plastics, Perfumes, etc.? Chemicals produced in the TCC form the basis for the manufacture of all these products. A pioneer producer of

- * CAUSTIC SODA
- * SODIUM HYDROSULPHITE
- * SODIUM SULPHIDE
- * HYDROCHLORIC ACID and other allied chemicals.

T.C.C.

serves industries and
through them
the country and the people.

THE TRAVANCORE-COCHIN CHEMICALS LIMITED,
UDYOGAMANDAL - 683501, KERALA.

RUBBER

(Malayalam monthly of the Rubber Board)

Annual subscription is Rs. 1.50

RUBBER BOARD BULLETIN

(English Quarterly)

Annual subscription for
a volume comprising four issues
of this Bulletin is Rs. 10
(Single copy - Rs. 2.50)

Please order your copy by remitting the subscription in advance to the SECRETARY,
RUBBER BOARD, KOTTAYAM-686 009.

CHINTHA BULLETIN

(Malayalam Fortnightly)

A May Day gift to working-class fighters.

A powerful weapon in their armoury.

Facts and figures, news and views in
capsule form from political, economic,
cultural and trade union fronts.

Prepared with assistance of the research
staff of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

Out on the first and sixteenth days of every month.

Single Copy : Re 1

Annual Subscription : Rs 24

For copies write to :

Circulation Manager,
Chintha Bulletin
Trivandrum 1.

JUNKO TABEI

CONQUERS MOUNT EVEREST!

The first woman to reach
the summit of Earth !!

It is marvellous to be the first in anything

KERALA IS FIRST AMONG INDIAN STATES

- * In implementing revolutionary land reforms
- * In distributing surplus land to the landless
- * In granting titles of land to the tenants
- * In nationalising private forests without compensation

Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala

Social Scientist

AUGUST NUMBER

Another three months, and the SS completes its third year of publication. To mark it, we are making the August issue a rather special one, dealing with the theme:

NATIONAL QUESTION IN INDIA

Analysts who have made a close study of the problem in different parts of the country will contribute to the discussion.

Subscribers who have paid up to August and later will get their copy by post. Over the counter, you can get it at our single copy price of Rs 3. No extra charge. If however you want it by registered post, send us Rs 4.50 to cover postal expenses.

Agents who want more copies (in excess of their normal consignment) of the special thematic number should send in their requirements by 20 July 1975.

That is also the last date for advertisers who can reach out to a wider audience in a special number.

Business Manager

Social Scientist

Indian School of Social Sciences

Trivandrum-1

Kerala

ERRATA

On page 26 of this issue

for 1966-66 in line 11 read 1960-61
" 1950-68 " " 12 " 1960-61
" 1970-75 " " 13 " 1970-71
" 1960-61 " " 17 " 1960-61 and 1970-71

With Best Compliments

from

A WELL-WISHER

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 OCTOBER 1974
Indian ocean and Japan in US grand strategy : *Michael Klare*;
Concept of tradition in Indian sociological thought : *H C Srivastava*; State and religion in the Chola empire : *N Vana-mamalai*; Irula folklore : *R Perialwar*; Adivasi oppression in Maharashtra : *Sharad Patil*; Communication on 'Marxism and Christianity; Appeal to all progressive writers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 NOVEMBER 1974
World capitalist crisis: *B T Ranadive*; Three misconceptions about the state: *Arvind N Das*; Attitudes to political parties: *Sheo Nath Singh*; Notes on: Indian industrial policy and economic power concentration; Signposts to new education.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 5 DECEMBER 1974
Inflation, stagnation and an alternative approach to planning: *Suhas Chattopadhyay*; Early South Indian society and economy - The Tinai concept: *K Sivathamby*; Report on economic crisis and the fifth five year plan; Notes on: Theory of convergence; Secondary school teachers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6/7 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1975. Current crisis, planning and growth : *Ashok Mitra*; Current inflation in India : *Prabhat Patnaik*; Fiscal policies and inflation : *M J K Thavaraj*; Distributional effects of inflation : *R Radhakrishna* and *Atul Sarma*; State intervention and foodgrain prices : *N Krishnaji*; A world without inflation : *E M S Namboodiripad*; Notes on: Development studies in Sri Lanka; Parliamentary process.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 8 MARCH 1975
Sociology and sociological radicalism : *S C Varma*; Colonialization of the Indian economy, 1757-1900 : *Irfan Habib*; Class character of the Indian Constitution : *Hari Chand*; Theories of state, Aristotle to Marx : *Arvind N Das*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 9 APRIL 1975
Samuelson's Marx-kritik: *J E King*; Problems of Indian history: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Origin and development of Islam: *Asghar Ali Engineer*; Student leadership in Lucknow: *Rashid Ali Syed*; Notes on: Mathematical methods in international relations analysis; Property rights under the Constitution.

Social Scientist

JUNE

1975

35

Studies in Development of Indian Capitalism
Political Economy of Food □ **Jaya Prakash**
Narayan's Politics □ **Marxism and Indian Soci-**
ology □ **National Sector and the Corrupt**
Heights □ **Marxism and Quantum Mechanics**

Social Scientist

Editor
Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor
Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation
SOCIAL SCIENTIST
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11
Air Mail : Annual \$ 17

(In Pound Sterling)

Sea Mail : Annual £ 4.50
Air Mail : Annual £ 6.00

Single Copy Rs .

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 3 JUNE
NUMBER 11 1975

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----|---|
| N Ram | 3 | Studies in the Development of Indian Capitalism |
| Kumaresch Chakravarty | 21 | Political Economy of Food |
| S C Varma | 38 | Jaya Prakash Narayan's Politics |

NOTES

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----|---|
| Anil Mahajan | 47 | Marxism and Indian Sociology |
| M J K Thavaraj | 60 | National Sector Undermines the Commanding Heights |

COMMUNICATION

- | | | |
|--------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| T Jayaraman | 65 | Marxism and Quantum Mechanics |
|--------------------|----|-------------------------------|

BOOK REVIEW

- | | | |
|-------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Rama Varma | 73 | Indian Administration |
|-------------------|----|-----------------------|

Articles, notes, communication and book review express the views of their authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY is in the Department of Bengali, Delhi College, University of Delhi.

T JAYARAMAN does postgraduate studies in physics at Madras Christian College, University of Madras.

ANIL MAHAJAN is research scholar in social anthropology at the University of Delhi.

N RAM, vice-president of the Students' Federation of India, is a Ph D research student at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Dr M J K THAVARAJ is professor of financial administration and head, management consultancy at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

Dr RAMA VARMA is an economic analyst from Cochin.

Dr S C VARMA teaches sociology at Lucknow University.

N RAM

Studies in the Development of Indian Capitalism

THE THEORETICAL positions examined in this article must be recognized as manoeuvres (in left and pseudo-academic uniform) against the science of Marxism-Leninism and against the working-class movement in India. These manoeuvres cannot be defended on the ground of the 'good intentions' of the authors, or the 'special meaning' of their words. We have relied on no less an objective scientist than Lenin in concluding that "at best 'good' intentions are the subjective affair of Tom, Dick or Harry, while the *social significance* of such statements is definite and indisputable and no reservation or explanation can diminish it."¹

It must be noted at the outset that while these specific 'theoretical' manoeuvres and devices are confined to a narrow and tiny sect, their ideological and social tendency is immediately seized upon by the 'New Lefts'; the 'creative Marxists', the ultra-'lefts', the 'left' Keynesians and, of course, the Congress regime to serve their purposes.

One cannot refrain from touching on another circumstance, which has no direct bearing on the work of these academics but is vital to an understanding of the relation between their theory and practice. It is their practical attitude to the working class and democratic movement in India.²

In the general circumstances of the ideological, political and class

struggle in India, the objective part played by these manoeuvres is, in every case, the same: to attack the science of Marxism-Leninism from the 'left', to confuse and mislead honest students of the science, to clear the way for support to the ideology and politics of the ruling classes and to serve them faithfully.

Where They Stand

The basic ideas of the sect, which are expressed in diverse forms can be presented as follows:

1 There can be no general conception or definition of capitalism equally relevant to the conditions of 'development' and 'underdevelopment'. There are no essential features that can be said to characterize a socio-economic formation called capitalism. Capitalism in the advanced capitalist countries was, and continues to be, different in all its essential features from the mode of production in the underdeveloped countries.

2 While capitalism in Europe's historical experience was an 'integrated', 'total' process which functioned on its own steam, in underdeveloped countries such as India, it did not go through this integrated, total process. In fact, generalized commodity production was imposed on India from outside by imperialism and did not develop into a genuine or full-fledged capitalism. While Lenin, following Marx, was able to understand the essential features of the capitalist countries with the integrated, total process, he failed to appreciate the unique and singular qualities of the non-white colonies and semi-colonies in their historical development. What is required is a 'theory of the colonial mode of production'. To study the unique and singular features of the colonial modes of production, one must go back to the 'method' of Marx (as opposed to the 'model') as Lenin, not to speak of Stalin, failed to do.

3 Advanced capitalist development and the colonial and semi-colonial world of underdevelopment are two repellent poles; two different animals, metropolis and satellite; opposite sides of the same coin; not merely 'relative and quantitative' but 'relational and qualitative'; even in 'dialectical contradiction'. In other words, they are in a contrary and an exact inverse relationship with each other and constitute a 'zero-sum game'. Imperialism might have industrialized Russia and the white colonies such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada; but it merely generated underdevelopment in the non-white colonies and semi-colonies. Its historical role, which Lenin could not really grasp was only to retard the development of capitalism in the underdeveloped world. In the strikingly schematic presentation of the question by Andre Gunder Frank and Bipan Chandra: While development develops, underdevelopment underdevelops, except for temporary spurts of development during wars or depression which plague the metropolis and momentarily weaken the spell of development over underdevelopment.

4 Marxists should be concerned not so much with the relationship of the Indian bourgeoisie with imperialism, but with the structural

integration of the Indian economy into the world capitalist system. Bipan Chandra, the historian of modern India, articulates this view sharply and in its most explicit and detailed form: The Indian bourgeoisie, a basically homogeneous class in its economic and political relationship with imperialism, developed from the beginning as a strong, independent, class. Its dominant sections have never had any alliance or partnership with international finance capital or with the emerging giant corporations. Its monopoly structure developed entirely on the basis of its own financial and industrial structure. In its economic and political relations and attitude the Indian capitalist class was on the whole anti-imperialist and anti-foreign capital. Even today, in spite of the increase in 'technical' collaboration agreements and in spite of the growth in 'foreign investment', it cannot be said that the national bourgeoisie, big or small, is entering into partnership with the giant foreign corporations, or that there is a single major or economically strategic sector of the Indian economy which is under the domination of foreign capital. However, while the basically homogeneous capitalist class, big or small, is anti-imperialist, anti-foreign capital, and follows a completely independent path of development, the same cannot be said for Indian capitalism. In the striking presentation of the view by Bipan Chandra:

While India's dependence on imperialism is not the result of the Indian capitalist class's domination by the imperialist capitalist class, it is still very much there because of the dependence of the Indian economy on imperialism which in turn is due to its being an integral part of the world capitalist economy. Thus, the 'external' restrictions on the Indian economy and its development are 'structural', i.e., the product of it being a well-structured part of world capitalism which inevitably produces development in one of its parts while producing underdevelopment in the other.³

5 The immediate stage of revolution in these underdeveloped countries is socialist. The Indian left has not been able to appreciate this because it has no 'theory of colonialism'. To hold the view that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not yet completed in India and that the people's democratic revolution must precede the socialist revolution means, from the standpoint of history, to slur over the unique and singular features of the Indian socio-economic formation in its development; from the standpoint of economics, to fail to understand the colonial mode of production and the underdevelopment that has been generated from the time India became a well-structured part of world capitalism; from the standpoint of politics, to evade the whole question of the world socialist revolution. Bipan Chandra asserts that the Indian bourgeoisie, a consistently anti-imperialist class from its origins, has completed, or virtually completed, the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This, of course, has been done in a 'non-revolutionary' way: the political tasks first, and then the economic task. To his ultra-'left' fellow-travellers like Gunder Frank,⁴ the question of the

bourgeois democratic revolution does not arise; or, if it arises, is characteristic of 'traditional Marxists' who cannot learn from Trotsky instead of Lenin and Stalin, do not have a 'theory of colonization' and, in any case, cannot distinguish development from underdevelopment or recognize that the uneven and combined development of capitalism constitutes, on a world scale, a zero-sum game.

Economic Nationalism

The main object of Bipan Chandra's academic work is to prettify the bourgeoisie in its historical development and to represent it as anti-imperialist from the beginning. The groundwork for the argument, which takes an explicit form in his later writings, is laid in his book, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India: Economic Policies of Indian National Leadership, 1880-1905*.⁸

This study which claims to examine the economic policies of the Indian national movement before the *swadeshi* agitation carried it forward to a higher and different phase is "concerned not with the correctness or otherwise of the nationalist attitudes and policies as judged according to the canons of the science of economics but with what the Indian leaders said and their manner of saying it and what can be learnt therefrom about their basic economic and political understanding and approach."⁹ In other words, the study is concerned with the ideological-programmatic aspects of economic nationalism.

The ideological-programmatic aspects are presented in purely descriptive terms, that is, the views of the economic nationalists are presented under various heads: The poverty of India; Industry I & II; Foreign trade; Railways; Tariffs; Currency and exchange; Labour; Agriculture I & II; Public finance I & II; The drain; and Indian political economy. The detailed study of the literature and other expressions of economic nationalism in the period 1880-1905 is not without interest to Marxist-Leninists concerned with the ideological-programmatic aspects of economic nationalism, but it must be noted that Bipan Chandra attempts very rarely to go beyond what the economic nationalists wrote, said and thought.

The first basic fault with Bipan Chandra's research, then, is derived from its *scope and method*: it is based entirely on a descriptive study of the views of the economic nationalists—as expressed in various books, reports, addresses and in the columns of newspapers and journals—in their sharply defined polemic against the views of British and pro-British economists and administrators who defended British economic and political rule in India to the hilt.

If Bipan Chandra had confined himself to this scope and method, we would have had an honest descriptive work without any analytical pretensions. But Bipan Chandra is so much carried away by his material and by his sympathy with the ideological-political aspects of economic nationalism that he does go beyond the scope and method that he sets for his study. It must be noted that while the economic nationalists powerfully

exposed some of the brutal as well as the disguised aspects of the colonial exploitation of India on the eve of imperialism, their theories could not and did not ever penetrate appearances and go to the real relations of production which underlay the appearances. Bipan Chandra's fatal mistake in relation to the theories of economic nationalism is to confuse their useful historical role in the struggle against British colonial rule with their scientific validity today as an analysis of real economic relationships in colonial India.

Thus, in his examination of the drain theory as advanced by the economic nationalists led by Dadabhai Naoroji and of the attacks on this theory, Bipan Chandra cannot avoid the temptation to express his opinion on the scientific correctness of this theory, while protesting that this is, perhaps, not appropriate to a study such as his: first, according to him, the critics of the economic nationalists have not done full justice to the depth and breadth of their economic insight and to their attitude towards the drain as part of a comprehensive, inter-related and integrated economic analysis of the Indian situation. Secondly, the chief political implication of the drain theory, according to the author, is that it

laid bare and enabled the Indians to arrive at the chief contradiction of the Indian situation of the time, namely, the contradiction between the Indian people and British imperialism...the drain theory was revolutionary in its political implications; it brought the question of political power to the centre of the stage; its acceptance not only brought the inherent political conflict between Britain and India to the surface but made the political domination of the former over the latter impermissible. This also explains why while nationalist criticism of British economic policy in several other respects and the consequent remedies suggested by the national leaders could be accepted by even the most ardent of British imperialists, the existence of the drain would not be accepted by even the most radical of them.⁷

It follows that what even the 'most radical' of British imperialists could not accept is acceptable, or almost acceptable, to Bipan Chandra and his fellow-travellers as a scientifically valid explanation.

Indigenous Bourgeoisie

And here we arrive at the second basic fault in Bipan Chandra's research: its ideological-political stand, viewpoint and method. It is not difficult to see how his understanding of the class character of early economic nationalism leads directly to his understanding of the class character of the regime of the Congress Party. Marxist-Leninists, studying the development of the freedom movement in India in its historical stages, understand the rise of economic nationalism as coming at the end of, and supervening on, an initial phase which was characterized by a series of acts of spontaneous resistance, a series of pitched battles, a series of armed clashes, between the people and the alien rulers in different parts of the country.⁸ They understand the character of economic nationalism by

studying primarily the emergence of the extremely important social classes, the indigenous bourgeoisie⁹ and, in the second place, by studying the *forms* in which its urges, its aspirations, its strivings, its programmes and even blueprints for capitalistically developing India (which indicated that the indigenous bourgeoisie was emerging as a force) expressed themselves.¹⁰

Marxist-Leninists must pay the closest attention to the development of this historical process through which the indigenous bourgeoisie asserted itself in its own way against the British rulers; but they must pay equally close attention to the vacillations; the inconsistency, the timidity and the compromising character of bourgeois nationalism which were already evident in the period of 'economic nationalism' and which developed and manifested themselves sharply in the later phases of the Indian freedom movement. One does not, of course, expect a fundamentally scientific, or Marxist-Leninist, analysis and attack on imperialism from the bourgeoisie in India or its spokesmen; but using this as a pretext, there is no justification for refusing to make, or for slurring over, the fundamental class distinction between the world outlook and politics of the bourgeoisie and the world outlook and politics of the proletariat; or for refusing to see that the bourgeoisie, while rousing and mobilizing the masses against imperialism in a later period, simultaneously tried to impose checks and limits (springing from its narrow class interests) on the anti-imperialist initiative and action of the masses; and, in fact, tried to compromise, or to "strike a deal with"¹¹ imperialism.

Class Analysis with a Difference

This is why Marxism-Leninism, as opposed to all opportunist deviations, holds that in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, a thoroughgoing struggle against imperialism and landlordism, which attacks imperialism and landlordism at their very roots, can be led only by the revolutionary proletariat. That is to say, the new democratic or people's democratic revolution (with is still fundamentally bourgeois democratic in its social character in its first step but which is not separated by a 'Chinese wall' from the socialist revolution) is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and state under bourgeois dictatorship, but a new type of revolution led by the proletariat. Its aim is to establish a state of people's democracy led by the proletariat and a new democratic society; its deeper purpose is to clear the path for the development of socialism. What is crucial to the people's democratic and socialist revolutions is the Marxist-Leninist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat¹².

Bipan Chandra of course has a set of alternative conclusions on the role of the bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist struggle, on the bourgeois democratic revolution, and on the role of the proletariat in a backward country such as India, because he has his own variant of 'class analysis'. This 'class analysis' and these conclusions can be seen, in embryonic form, in his picture of economic nationalism. The nature of the remedies that

the Indian leaders suggested, or of their economic policies was 'basically anti-imperialist'¹³. While their political demands were moderate, their economic demands were radically nationalist. This was because they had acquired a deep understanding of "the complex economic mechanism of the system of British domination over India or of modern imperialism,"¹⁴ an understanding derived by taking in the entire range of economic issues and studying them in "their relationships and in their totality within the framework of economic development"¹⁵. They clearly grasped that "the essence of British economic imperialism lay in the subordination of India's economy to Britain's,"¹⁶ and all their economic demands were ultimately rooted in the desire for a "genuine national economic policy"¹⁷ which would be determined by the interests of India and not of England. While they did not take up the class demands of the peasantry and the workers, their total concern was with "the welfare of the community and they, therefore, tried to represent the interests of all classes of Indian society"¹⁸. The brilliance of their grasp of the essential weakness of India's economy consisted in the fact that they focused all their thought and attention on India's colonial structure. While they could have done far more to protect the interests of the downtrodden groups and classes, they also "showed a high degree of altruism in proposing policies which went against the narrow interests of that section of society to which most of them belonged namely, the urban, educated middle class"¹⁹. If they took up some of the demands of the urban lower, middle and upper middle classes, they did this as part of "the all-round agitation around the economic demands of all sections of the Indian society".²⁰

A 'Theory' of Class Consciousness

The question, then, arises: to what class did the economic nationalists belong and whose interests did they represent and articulate? Bipan Chandra answers this question, to start with, by criticizing the tendency among writers, Indian and foreign, to look upon the early Indian nationalist writers, public men, journalists and thinkers as a class—the 'middle class'—instead of seeing them as "intellectual representatives of new Indian classes and of Indian nationalism"²¹. While maintaining formally that these nationalists were not above class or group, Bipan Chandra introduces on the same page a theory all his own on the relationship between the class interests and consciousness of intellectuals: as intellectuals, some of them represented different interests, classes or groups; but because they were intellectuals, "their thinking was guided, at the level of consciousness, by thought and not by interest"²². Particularly in times of rapid social change, of the disruption of the old socio-political structures and of the birth of new classes and economic and political systems,

a thinker, a philosopher in the wider sense of the term, an intellectual, can and does often rise above the narrow group into which he is born and represent the interests of a class or a group or even a nation other than his own...the Indian thinkers and intellectuals of

the 19th century too were philosophers and not hacks of a party or a class...when they reflected the interests of a class or a group, they did so through the prism of ideology and not directly as members or the obedient servants, of that class or group"²³.

Bipan Chandra has the grace to concede that the economic outlook of the Indian national leaders was "basically capitalist" in that, in nearly every aspect of economic life, they championed capitalist growth in general and the interests of the industrial capitalists in particular. They were pro-capitalist because they believed that the industrial capitalists alone could accomplish in practice what they proposed in their speeches and writings, namely rapid industrialization. "They represented the industrial capitalist class only in the sense that their economic thinking and programme did not go beyond the limits which *industrialization along capitalist lines* imposed in practice."²⁴ (Emphasis added).

Declassing of the Intellectual

Here, in a capsule, we have pseudo-academic casuistry in the service of opportunism, which parades as "Marxism" while denying the elementary sense of the Marxist-Leninist class outlook. Marxism-Leninism avoids the vulgar sociological trap of understanding the class character of economic nationalism by mechanically cataloguing the personal origins of the leading economic nationalists as 'lower middle class', 'upper middle class', 'capitalist', and so on and by arriving at an 'average', or at an analysis differentiated by more sophisticated means. Marxism-Leninism, indeed, recognizes the possibility (especially in times of rapid social change or sharp class struggle, when new social classes and new socio-economic relations are emerging and developing, and when the masses are on the move) of a thinker, a philosopher in the wider sense of the term, or an intellectual rising above the class into which he is born and becoming part of another class. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung, Fidel Castro and a great many other teachers and leaders of the working class in different countries,²⁵ including India, are inspiring examples of the realization of this possibility. But the point is that these intellectuals "rise above their class"—from intellectual and scientific conviction linked closely with revolutionary practice—by rising above the bourgeois class outlook, by acquiring the proletarian class outlook and by becoming part of the proletariat and the proletarian party and movement in the fight to refashion the world according to that outlook.

At a much lower level, Marxism-Leninism takes into account the possibility of tension between, say, a great writer's consciously held complex of views and the ideological tendency emerging from the objective picture of social reality depicted in his works, as in the case of Balzac, who was thus "compelled to go against his class sympathies and political prejudices,"²⁶ or the tension between Tolstoy's sympathies which were categorically and passionately with the peasant masses, their ideas and sentiments and which, combined with his artistic greatness, enabled him to

reflect the contradictory conditions of Russian life in the last third of the nineteenth century and become "the mirror of the Russian revolution"²⁷ and his reactionary utopian views and solutions which were incompatible with the real interests of the peasant masses and their liberation²⁸.

Quite apart from the fact that Dadabhai Naoroji was no Balzac in his grasp of real historical processes and that the best of Gokhale was very far from being a mirror of the democratic revolution in India, what is an issue with Bipan Chandra is not the subjective or consciously held views and sympathies of economic nationalism,²⁹ but its class character and class outlook. The valuable historical role of economic nationalism against British rule in India as well as its vacillating and compromising tendency cannot be in serious dispute among Marxist-Leninists; the specific contribution made by the theoreticians of economic nationalism (through their writings on the mechanism of the drain, on poverty in India, and on British economic and political policies) to an understanding of real socio-economic relations in colonial India on the eve of imperialism can be determined by a precise and critical study from the standpoint of scientific political economy: what is undeniable even in the present state of knowledge is that there was no question of economic nationalism rising above its bourgeois class character and outlook.

Scaling Theoretical Heights

What is distinctive about Bipan Chandra's recent academic work is the rash ascent from descriptive history enlivened by snatches of theory of a sort to a theoretical height which needs no groundwork.³⁰ Whether Bipan Chandra first hit upon and articulated these views (as he claims) in the course of a tour of Canada, or whether Gunder Frank was the original author (as is more commonly assumed) is a matter to be disputed and settled by their respective disciples. What is most relevant is the basic identity of views between Gunder Frank and Bipan Chandra on all matters concerning the structural integration of the world of underdevelopment, including India, in the world capitalist economy. Both see a basic 'continuity in change' in the development of capitalism in the underdeveloped world: the same monopoly structure, the same stagnation and backwardness, and the same development of underdevelopment.

From economic nationalism, which has been studied descriptively and in a literary fashion, to the development of capitalism in India, which can be understood by using the master-key of underdevelopment patented by Gunder Frank and Bipan Chandra, is an easy transition for one who believes in the doctrine of 'continuity in change'. Bipan Chandra's composite schema of capitalism and revolution in India comprises at least three sub-schema and one original model which are outlined below.

1. Historical Development of Indian Bourgeoisie

(a) While the Indian capitalist class was not completely homogeneous, and while there were differences in the degree of contradictions

between its different parts or segments and imperialism, derived from differences based on commerce and industry, finance and industry, region and size, these were purely individual differences. The class as a whole revealed a basic homogeneity in its economic and political relationship with imperialism, a homogeneity revealed after 1927 in the pre-eminent position accorded by the class, and by the government, to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and to certain individuals such as Purushotamdas Thakurdas and G D Birla.

(b) From the beginning the Indian capitalist class did not develop an organic link with British capital; it was not integrated with foreign capital in India. Indian capitalists during the twentieth century were not in the main middlemen between British capitalists in Britain or India and the Indian market. Some of their progenitors might have started out from the middle of the nineteenth century as traders between Britain and India or between India and the Far East, but they traded on their own account, under their own financial steam, often in competition with British trading firms. The overwhelming majority of the Indian industrialists did not develop as junior partners of British entrepreneurs in India, and at no stage was the main body of the Indian capitalist class subordinated to foreign capital, industrial or financial. Even for finance, the Indian industrialists did not depend on British finance capital. The family histories of some of the leading Indian industrialists of the twentieth century, such as the Tatas, the Birlas, Shri Ram, the Dalmia Jains, Vithaldas Thackersey and so on reveal no signs of any major contact with, not to speak of subordination to, foreign capital. In short, for its economic existence, the Indian capitalist class did not depend on, and had no major contact with, foreign capital. Not being so 'tied up', it did not become an ally of British imperialism.

(c) The historical difference between the Indian bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of advanced capitalist countries (such as Britain in the seventeenth century, France in the eighteenth century and Germany and Japan in the nineteenth century) was that the former was the bourgeoisie of an underdeveloped country that was structurally integrated into world capitalism as a colony. That is to say, "while the Indian capitalist class was not a class integrated with British capital in a subordinate position, the economy of which it was a part was so, i.e., colonially integrated with and subordinated to world capitalism."^{9.1} This was the source of the weakness and constraints under which the Indian capitalist class functioned. To understand the economic and political capacities and frailties of this class, one should look to the structure of the colonial economy and not to its alleged subordinate position: it was the economy which was colonially subordinated, and structured, not the capitalist class which struggled against imperialism and for independent capitalist development; this is a fate not peculiar to the Indian capitalist class, for world capitalism as a structure exists as imperialism, whose one part is developed and metropolitan, at

the cost of the other, which is underdeveloped.

This sub-schema of the historical development of the bourgeoisie in India leads directly to what Bipan Chandra refers to as his 'basic hypothesis': the Indian capitalist class developed a long-term contradiction with imperialism, while retaining a relationship of dependence and accommodation on a short-term basis.

2. *Long-term Conflict*

(a) There was a conflict with British home industry. The Indian capitalists saw clearly that they must limit and then bring to an end the domination of their internal market by British and other foreign industries. Consequently, they agitated for effective tariff protection to their industries and, later on, against Imperial Preference and for high export duties on certain raw materials needed by Indian industries, and for tariff autonomy for the Government of India.

(b) The large-scale investments of foreign capital in Indian industry after 1918 led to a strong attack on foreign capital.

(c) The Indian capitalists objected to the domination of the Indian banking structure by British finance capital and demanded, from about 1913, that a controlling central bank should be formed and placed under the control either of Indian shareholders or of the Indian legislature. Throughout the twentieth century, an intense economic struggle was waged by Indian capital to oust British capital from, and to acquire a dominant position in, banking and insurance in India.

(d) The entire Indian capitalist class rallied behind the individual Indian efforts to appropriate a larger share of foreign trade and shipping (as an important source of surplus appropriation) and other invisible items of the balance of payments. The Indian struggle against the British shipping monopoly began in the 1890s and was pressed on relentlessly in spite of repeated failures. The capitalists also made a determined effort in the 1910s and 1930s to get a law passed reserving Indian shipping for Indians.

(e) The Indian capitalist class was fully aware of the need for active and direct state aid to its operations and it carried out a prolonged and all-sided struggle on this issue. It saw state action as the major instrument for keeping foreign capital out as also under check, through direct administrative action and through public sector enterprises where there was no possibility of the investment of Indian capital.

(f) The Indian capitalist class fully realized that the imperialist economic exploitation of India blocked its long-term growth and opposed all the three major channels through which the metropolis extracted India's social surplus: the domination of the Indian market; the investment of foreign capital, industrial and finance; and the direct expropriation of surplus through control over public finance and in particular through high military expenditure for imperial purposes.

These ingredients, on which the metropolitan power could not, and

did not, yield and on which no basic compromise was possible, made up the long-term conflict between the Indian capitalist class and imperialism according to Bipan Chandra.

3. Short-term Dependence and Collaboration

The sub-schema of short-term collaboration, through which the long-term hostility is muted, is essentially a concession to those who are unhappy over the formulation that the Indian bourgeoisie is a consistent anti-imperialist fighter. Its ingredients are :

(a) The Indian capitalists did get a chance to grow continuously, however oppressed they might feel, and they were never directly or nakedly suppressed. The two world wars, in particular, presented them opportunities for windfall profits and rapid growth and thus put breaks on the development of anti-imperialist sentiments among them in the short-run.

(b) The Indian capitalist class began its upward climb during the second half of the nineteenth century from extremely modest beginnings. There was hardly any primitive or original capital with which to start, and the rate of capital accumulation by the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie was extremely slow. Such a weak capitalist class lacked the self-confidence needed to challenge the mightiest imperialism of the day. The slow rate and the petty amount of accumulation of Indian capital could be accommodated by imperialism. All the major capitalist families of modern India developed during the nineteenth century from rather humble beginnings; did not belong to families which were ruined earlier; and nursed quite positive memories of British rule. This created a psychology of overall satisfaction with British rule for at least the first or second generation entrepreneurs.

(c) While the Indian capitalist class did not depend on British capital, it did, in the short run, depend on the colonial administration for innumerable purposes. The colonial administration had control over major internal transport, mining concessions, land leaseholds, facilities for the generation of electric power, government contracts etc; had the power to buy industrial products, give or withhold permission to start factories at particular sites; tax; and had, in its labour policy and the power to guarantee 'law and order' and 'social peace' important instruments of leverage.

(d) Another source of short-term compromise was the imperialist policy towards the Indian capitalist class. While opposing or neglecting the basic, overall and long-term interests of this class, the British rulers followed the policy of giving it timely concessions in order to preserve the colonial system. Two factors dictated this policy throughout the twentieth century; the crisis of the colonial economy reflected in agricultural stagnation and large-scale unemployment; and the rising tempo of a popular national movement which was getting increasingly mass-based.

It bears emphasis that Bipan Chandra's 'basic hypothesis' of the relationship of the capitalist class to imperialism (long-term antagonism,

and short-term collaboration and dependence) has a two-faced advantage which the author evidently considers 'dialectical'. It has the advantage, the standpoint of the 'left', of holding that the Indian bourgeoisie played a 'non-revolutionary' role in leading the anti-imperialist struggle; and the advantage, from the standpoint of the Indian bourgeoisie, in concealing its dual, two-faced or contradictory character, its tendency towards collaboration and its tendency towards conflict with imperialism.

Bipan Chandra holds that the Indian bourgeoisie always stayed in the camp of imperialism. It gave broad support to the national movement against imperialism and to its "petty-bourgeois leadership."³² The strategy of the Indian bourgeoisie in its confrontation with imperialism is expressed by Bipan Chandra in the 'dialectical' formula: S (P)—C—S.³³ Struggle (Pressure)—Compromise—Struggle. The form repeats itself in cycles, and with each cycle, the content of the struggle rises to a higher level, in a grand movement until a bourgeois nation-state and independent economic development are ushered in. Such is the 'dialectical' movement in Bipan Chandra's schema and such is the strategy of the victorious bourgeois democratic revolution in India under the leadership of the Indian bourgeoisie.

Bourgeois Democratic Revolution: Indian Model

Bipan Chandra criticizes the tendency among recent Marxist writers to "posit broadly two historical models which are then held to apply in all essentials to all the extent or possible cases."³⁴ One is the 'French model' in which the bourgeoisie plays the leading role and, undeterred by the rise of a left-wing on its flank, boldly overthrows the absolutist monarchy and the feudal nobility, and thus under its own leadership accomplishes the bourgeois democratic revolution. The second, the 'Chinese' or 'Russian', model involves the bourgeoisie starting out on the road to democratic revolution but (because of its class links with the semi-feudal landed class and colonialism and the consequent lack of independence in politics and because of its fear of the simultaneously developing radical forces of the politically aroused working class and peasantry) vacillating and ultimately abandoning or betraying its historical task of making the bourgeois democratic revolution. The two subcases of the second model are: (a) This betrayal leads to a certain period of counter-revolutionary predominance or the restoration of imperialism and semi-feudalism. (b) Alternatively, or following the period of counter-revolution, the working class develops its political force, allies with the peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeoisie and brings the bourgeois democratic revolution to fruition under its leadership, leading to a quick transfer to socialism. What is common to both subcases is the notion of the bourgeoisie betraying the national liberation struggle by allying itself with imperialism.

The 'creative Marxist' Bipan Chandra discovers a 'third model' from the Indian pattern of development: The bourgeoisie revealed the capacity to fulfil the bourgeois democratic tasks, but in a non-revolutionary

way and without completing the economic and political tasks simultaneously.

What are the elements of the bourgeois strategy which has enabled it to complete the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution?

First, the state in India has been gradually trying to implement internally a bourgeois democratic programme of social and economic reforms of the sort usually associated with the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution. India has not been following internally, *a la* Chiang Kai-shek, a neocolonial or semi-feudal programme. Socially, the caste system is being eroded to the extent that it does not remain an obstacle to capitalism; education spreads, women are educated on a massive scale, and the oppression of women and family ties take on, increasingly, a bourgeois colouring. The cultural and moral ethos is virtually dominated by the cash nexus. The structure of agrarian relations is transformed gradually, stage by stage, in the capitalist direction. Politically, parliamentary democracy and adult franchise prevail from the village to the national plane, and the Indian administration is dominated by the bourgeoisie.

Secondly, state power has been used by an extremely mature and far-sighted bourgeois political leadership to counter imperialist penetration through economic-administrative measures and through the assignment of a very active and large role to the public and state sector in modern industry. The resources of the state have been used to train a large army of engineers, scientists and technical workers. Even the economic integration with world capitalism is sought to be loosened through administrative means.

Thirdly, economic aid and technical assistance from the socialist countries and the development of trade with them has played a crucial role in the non-revolutionary completion of bourgeois democratic tasks and in the development and strengthening of independent capitalism.

Fourthly, the Indian bourgeois order has been based from its inception in 1947 on the most advanced system of political legitimization, bourgeois democracy. Every successive election has politicized or 'politically socialized' an increasing number of people. Consequently, at no stage have any significant number of people questioned the legitimacy of the political system. Even the most radical critics of the system have had to function within its rules of the game.

Fifthly, India's foreign policy has played a major role, particularly after political unrest began to develop, in cementing the diverse social forces around the dominant political leadership. Foreign policy and its cementing role have been consciously used to follow the path of independent capitalist development to counter overt imperialist blackmail and to weaken the clan of the left-wing opposition.

Sixthly, the failure of the anti-capitalist left-wing to seriously challenge the existing social order, even when the objective conditions favoured

such a challenge, has enabled capitalism to develop in India. Just as, before 1947, the bourgeois nationalist leadership was at no stage faced with a serious left-wing challenge based on an independent mobilization of the people against imperialism under left-wing leadership; so also, after 1947, there has been no such left-wing mass, nationwide political mobilization, either on the agrarian question or against imperialist economic penetration. The bourgeoisie has simply not become reactionary, or abandoned its internal bourgeois reforms, including economic reforms and political democracy, and joined up with imperialism in an anti-communist and anti-people crusade. Thus, the reformist bourgeoisie has succeeded in weakening semi-feudalism and imperialism and in building capitalism both in agriculture and industry precisely because the left was strong enough to keep it on its toes, but not strong enough to endanger it to such an extent that it was compelled to take shelter in the lap of imperialism and feudalism.

Political Implications

Bipan Chandra tries to balance this reformist understanding by taking into account two basic constraints on the strategy of development in India. The first constraint consists in the fact that an underdeveloped capitalist country finds it impossible to develop today without basic internal social, economic and political changes which would take the economy out of the capitalist path. The second constraint is that India is a well-structured part of the world capitalist economy.³⁵

The political conclusion is intended to appear dialectical, but reads more like a philistine riddle: "Imperialist penetration occurs and the danger of neo-colonialism arises because India follows the path of independent capitalism", and the struggle against imperialism, semi-colonialism or neo-colonialism in India has to take the form of a struggle against the development of capitalism³⁶.

I have reproduced Bipan Chandra's argument at such length because it attempts to cement, using a variant of Trotskyism, all the major planks of reformism or opportunism from the right with the ultra-'left' opportunist position on India's 'dependent', 'semi-colonial' or 'neo-colonial' status. Such a schema accommodates a very large spectrum of anti-Marxist views and leaves open the possibility of transforming India, by pseudo-academic casuistry or by a mere sleight-of-hand subjective inclination, from a country ruled by an anti-imperialist bourgeoisie having no links with foreign finance capital to a 'semi-colony' or a 'neo-colony' in the lap of imperialism.

It is essential to note how Marxism-Leninism differs, root and branch, from such crass opportunism. Every essential component of this opportunism is emphatically refuted by the programmatic and tactical documents³⁷ and the polemical literature³⁸ of the party of the working class, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which clarify the total irreconcilability of Marxism-Leninism with the foregoing theoretical outlook

on four fundamental questions: (a) the development of capitalism in India and of the Indian bourgeoisie; (b) the relationship of the bourgeoisie in India to imperialism; (c) the character of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, with particular reference to the people's democratic revolution in India; and (d) the development of the working class and democratic movement, its achievements, its position, and its perspective and historical role in emancipating the people of India.

- ¹ V I Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism," *Collected Works* Vol 14, p 345, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1960.
- ² Bipan Chandra, for instance, has ranged himself openly against the working class and democratic movement and on the side of the Congress regime. He has refused to express even a common liberal's reservations about, not to mention speaking out against, the anti-people's character and policies of the state and government in India; against the terror and massive repression let loose by the central and state governments and the Congress Party on the working class and democratic movement and on the people of West Bengal; and against the planned and systematic murder of hundreds of class fighters belonging to the CPI (M) and to democratic mass organizations, who have stood in the forefront of the struggles of workers, peasants and other section of the people in that state. And, it is no surprise that in order to record his contempt for 'reformism', this advocate of permanent revolution has come out openly and repeatedly against the students and the students' union of the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi whenever they have launched direct action in support of their academic and elementary democratic rights; functioned consciously as an instrument of the university management; and led a policy of repression against the leaders and activists of the democratic student movement at the university. Bipan Chandra is professor in modern history at the Centre for Historical Studies of the School of Social Sciences at the university and a leading light of the Indian Council for Historical Research.
- ³ Bipan Chandra's mimeographed paper, "Modern India and Imperialism" ("for discussion only, not to be published"), read at a seminar on "Spheres of Influence in the Age of Imperialism", Austria, September 11 to 15, 1972, pp 10-11.
- ⁴ See Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, Pelican Books, 1971 (first published in 1967), pp 368; and review of this book by N Ram in *Social Scientist* 7 February 1973. Also see Gunder Frank, *Lumpen-Bourgeoisie: Lumpen-Development—Dependence, Class, and Politics in Latin America*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1972; and "On 'Feudal Modes, Models and Methods of Escaping Capitalist Reality,'" *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 6, 1973, and "Reflections on Green, Red and White Revolutions in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* January 20, 1973. Gunder Frank, denouncing all 'reformist', including "traditional Marxist' solutions, proclaims that "the only possible immediate programme of a revolutionary political party in each of these countries must be a socialist revolution". *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 6, 1973, p 37.
- ⁵ This 783-page book was published by People's Publishing House, New Delhi in 1966 and reprinted in 1969.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p xiii.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 689 & 706.
- ⁸ E M S Namboodiripad, "Economic Foundations of the Freedom Movement in India", Speech to the students of the Madras Christian College, Tambaram, on July 24, 1973, available in typescript.
- ⁹ It must not be forgotten, as Namboodiripad pointed out in the speech cited above, that the initial strivings of the bourgeoisie in India and its urge for a change in the

- social and economic system began earlier than 1857. For a perceptive analysis of the role of the bourgeoisie in India at different phases of the movement for freedom, refer to the speech cited above.
- 10 Ranade's speech at the first Industrial Conference at Poona in 1890 may be considered "a manifesto of the emerging bourgeoisie", (E M S Namboodiripad, speech cited above).
 - 11 J V Stalin, "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East: Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, May 18, 1925", *Works* Vol 7, p 150, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1954.
 - 12 For a discussion of the Marxist-Leninist concept of the New Democratic or People's Democratic revolution, see Stalin's speech cited above, and Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy," *Selected Works*, Vol II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1967. Also see the CPI (M)'s *Programme*, cited below, especially pp 23-49.
 - 13 Bipan Chandra's book, cited above, p 746.
 - 14 *Ibid.*
 - 15 *Ibid.*
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p 747.
 - 17 *Ibid.*
 - 18 *Ibid.*, p 749.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, p 751.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, p 752.
 - 21 *Ibid.*
 - 22 *Ibid.*, It is difficult to determine whether this formulation implies the unconscious or subconscious guidance of their thinking by *interests*, as opposed to *thought*; consequently, where a variant of neo-Freudianism ends and where 'Marxism' begins is not at all clear in the world outlook of Bipan Chandra.
 - 23 *Ibid.*
 - 24 *Ibid.*, 753.
 - 25 For an illuminating study of how a warlord "rose above his class" and became a communist and a great leader of the Communist Party of China and the People's Liberation Army, see Agnes Smedly, *The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu-teh*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1956. An earlier and more classic example, of course, is that of Lu Hsun, a bourgeois intellectual trained in Confucian norms, immersing himself in the anti-imperialist movement of the masses and in the May Fourth Movement; blazing a revolutionary path in literature; fighting every form of obscurantism, liberalism and capitulation; and ultimately becoming a communist and an inspiration to the working-class movement.
 - 26 This assessment by Friedrich Engels is cited by Mohan Thampi in his useful discussion of the Marxist attitude to "World Outlook and Literary Value", *Social Scientist* 9, August 1972.
 - 27 See Lenin "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol 15, and "Leo Tolstoy and His Epoch," Vol 17, cited by Mohan Thampi.
 - 28 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 17, p 52.
 - 29 The question, to what extent were Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale or, later on, Gandhi and Nehru *conscious* that they represented, and spoke for, the bourgeoisie, and whether they believed *subjectively* that they represented the interests of all the classes of India and spoke for the people, does not interest us very much. We leave such questions to be settled by historians such as Bipan Chandra and to biographers, social psychologists and psychiatrists who strive to lay bare the heart, soul and psyche of these leaders.
 - 30 Anyone who bothers to study Bipan Chandra's two papers, "The Indian Capitalist Class and Imperialism before 1947" (Paper No 26, presented at the International Seminar on "Imperialism, Independence and Social Transformation in the Contemporary World", March 24 to 29, 1972) and "Modern India and Imperialism" cited

earlier; and his presidential address to the thirty-second session of the Indian History Congress, December 1970, titled "Colonialism and Modernization" can determine for himself how much research, and of what kind, has gone into their preparation.

³¹ Bipan Chandra, "The Indian Capitalist Class and Imperialism before 1947," cited above, p 5.

³² *Ibid.*, p 31.

³³ *Ibid.*, p 22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p 29.

³⁵ Bipan Chandra, "Modern India and Imperialism", cited above, pp 15-17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p 17.

³⁷ See *Programme of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)* and *Statement of Policy*, published by the CPI (M), 49 Lake Place, Calcutta 29, November 1971. Also see the *Political-Organizational Report* adopted at the Eighth Congress, and the *Political Resolution* adopted at the Ninth Congress at Madurai, June 27 to July 2, 1972, and other documents and resolutions published by the CPI (M).

³⁸ See *What Dange Programme Reveals: A Real Face of Revisionists* by M Basavapunniah, P Ramamurti and Harkishan Singh Surjeet, a C P Publication, New Delhi; *Fight Against Revisionism: Two Programmes X-rayed*, by B T Ranadive; and various other pamphlets and booklets that played a role in the ideological-political and organizational struggle against revisionism in the communist movement in India.

KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY

Political Economy of Food

PART TWO

THE FIRST PART of this study (*Social Scientist* 34, May 1975) dealt with vital factors governing foodgrain production. Of equal importance is the sphere of distribution which involves net production procurement, import, change in government stock and public distribution and exchange in the free market, that is, market arrivals other than public procurement. Actual demand and consumption are different and related to supply and prices. It is therefore proposed to separate the discussion on distribution from that on consumption of foodgrains.

Table XV presents data relating to net production, public procurement, import, public distribution and availability of cereals. In this table fluctuations in the rate of per capita availability per day indicate nothing but erratic trends in production, and in import of cereals. Public distribution is divided into several types: statutory rationing, modified rationing, jail distribution and occasional distribution for a temporary period in famine or drought-stricken areas. We shall see later that cereals supplied even through statutory rationing—where generally the highest quota per head is supplied—is less than sufficient. As a result, in metropolitan cities and in other urban centres a sizable quantity of cereals is sold in the free market. It is here that a part of rural surplus of better cereals (rice and wheat) is generally sold at very high prices, automatically generating

TABLE XV

FOODGRAINS

NET AVAILABILITY, PRODUCTION AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

Year	RICE			WHEAT		ALL CEREALS			PROCUREMENT			Public distribution	Per-capita availability (kgs per day)	
	Net production	Import	Total availability	Net production	Import	Total availability	Net production	Import	Total availability	Wheat	Rice			Total (cereals)
1960-61	303	7	310	96	44	140	606	52	656	9	4	13	40	0.40
1965-66	268	8	276	91	66	157	546	75	622	30	4	41	141	0.34
1966-67	266	8	274	100	78	178	576	103	677	31	2	40	132	0.36
1967-68	329	5	334	144	64	208	725	87	832	28	8	45	102	0.44
1968-69	348	6	354	164	31	195	732	40	777	35	25	65	94	0.40
1969-70	353	2	355	176	29	205	768	31	810	30	32	65	88	0.41
1970-71	369	3	372	208	21	229	844	24	894	33	51	88	78	0.44
1971-72	377	2	379	231	11	242	821	13	788	33	50	86	104	0.38
1972-73	338	—	338	218	10	228	750	10	754	26	44	73	114	0.35

SOURCES: *Economic Survey, 1973-74; The Economic Times.*

TABLE XVI

MARKET ARRIVALS, 1971-72

(in '000 tonnes)

State	RICE						WHEAT						OTHER CEREALS					
	Total			Total			Total			Total			Total			Total		
	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-July-Sept	Oct-Sept	April-June-Sept	July-Dec	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June-Sept	Oct-Sept	Jan-March	April-June-Sept
Andhra	70.1	83.2	70.3	52.9	276.5	0.3	0.1	Neg	0.5	0.9	19.7	10.9	11.0	9.3	50.9	—	—	—
Assam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bihar	28.6	32.2	15.9	11.6	88.3	13.2	10.8	10.3	5.7	40.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.2	—	—	—
Gujarat	15.1	8.8	5.2	4.9	34.0	66.0	20.5	24.6	18.1	129.2	58.0	41.8	31.8	30.1	161.7	—	—	—
Karnataka	21.3	20.1	17.0	15.0	73.0	4.7	3.1	3.4	7.5	18.7	32.0	18.1	13.8	14.6	78.5	—	—	—
Kerala	11.3	25.7	25.7	14.2	75.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Madhya Pradesh	24.8	29.2	3.0	1.8	58.8	43.0	5.9	12.3	10.5	71.7	11.9	12.9	7.3	4.2	36.3	—	—	—
Maharashtra	1.4	4.5	1.7	1.1	8.7	49.3	13.1	15.5	24.3	102.2	25.0	12.2	11.1	13.0	61.3	—	—	—
Orissa	22.4	20.8	15.5	11.0	69.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Punjab and Haryana	349.5	24.5	2.3	2.3	378.6	1098.2	164.0	86.5	31.8	1380.5	90.1	39.2	7.8	4.0	141.1	—	—	—
Rajasthan	—	—	—	—	—	85.4	33.8	26.1	23.9	169.2	28.1	30.9	26.2	13.5	98.7	—	—	—
Tamil Nadu	95.7	143.1	73.1	75.3	387.2	—	—	—	—	—	15.4	6.9	5.3	8.9	36.5	—	—	—
Uttar Pradesh	209.0	129.5	38.5	17.0	394.0	622.0	321.3	158.7	75.3	1177.3	81.8	33.8	5.6	5.2	126.4	—	—	—
West Bengal	45.0	68.7	41.8	24.3	179.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
All India	894.2	590.3	310.0	231.5	2026.0	1982.1	572.6	337.4	197.6	3089.7	362.3	206.8	120.1	103.4	792.6	—	—	—

Source: Bulletin on Food Statistics, 1973, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, 1973.

a price spiral in the rural areas also. Within the rural areas a small section of professionals, earners of fixed income, can afford to buy their needs at relatively higher prices. And this is what forms the main condition favourable for speculative hoarding.

There is no other way of explaining the mystery of acute market scarcity of foodgrains even when the average per capita availability goes up. It accounts for the abnormally high rates of return for the surplus-holders or traders.

In table XVI we get one year's official figures of market arrivals of cereals, by state. These figures are based on actual verification at a large number of selected market centres. These however, do not give any clear indication of the actual surplus marketed. It is difficult to assume that a substantial part of the surplus of actual surplus-owners reach the markets. For, in the peak season, most of the crops come from small landowners, middle peasants and poor peasants who make what is known as 'distress' sale. The big surplus-owners' produce comes to the market mostly during the lean months when prices are higher, a part of it on the eve of the harvest season, anticipating a decline in prices. Besides, the system of crop-loan is prevalent in the villages, and in case this form of usury brings a higher rate of return there is no reason why the landlord should bring all his produce to the market.

Marketing and Prices

Thus the entire marketable surplus of big landowners, particularly landlords, is distributed through a combination of the following means: (a) crop-loan to the rural poor; (b) marketing within the rural areas through exchange between the surplus-owner and poor consumer at exorbitant prices; (c) marketing in urban areas either through exchange between the landlord and the wholesale trader, or by the landlord combining in himself the wholesale trader (the fact that big landowners get more short-term loans in addition to term loans for building cold storage and godowns confirm this) and (d) an insignificant part is sold to the government if the prices are 'remunerative'.

From statistics available we find (Table XVI) that in 1971-72, total market arrival of rice was 2026 thousand tonnes out of a total rice production of 43068 thousand tonnes; 3089.7 thousand tonnes out of a total wheat production of 26409.9 thousand tonnes, and 5908.6 thousand tonnes out of total cereal output 105167.7 thousand tonnes. Market arrival of rice as a percentage of output comes to less than 5; of wheat to less than 12; and of all cereals to less than 6 per cent. If we add public procurement figures, there is no change of marked significance: altogether rice would constitute less than 13 per cent, wheat less than 31 per cent, and all cereals less than 14 per cent.

Obviously the failure to procure landlords' surplus lies at the root of profiteering and speculative hoarding of foodgrains. In tables XVII and XVIII we find monthly wholesale prices of rice and wheat in selected

market centres. These wholesale prices do not indicate anything like real prices. Retail price for the consumer is at least 75 to 100 per cent over the wholesale. But the fact that prices vary from one quarter to another—sometimes from month to month—is itself a proof of controlled supply for higher prices and of distress sale for lower prices received by the poorer sections of the peasantry, who sell cheap and buy dear at a later date. Index numbers of foodgrain prices from 1971 to 1974¹⁴ show that, at least during these years increased production did visibly change the price trends. Curiously enough, it is also during these years that foodgrain procurement was poorer than before.

Wheat Bias

As noticed already, procurement made a poor show in 1971-72, the year of highest production among the three years 1970-71, 1971-72 and 1972-73. In foodgrain procurement, wheat forms the largest part—3183 thousand tonnes out of a total of 6714 thousand in 1970-71, 5088 out of 8857 in 1971-72, and 5024 out of 7698 in 1972-73. Out of the 3183 thousand tonnes of wheat procured in 1970-71, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh accounted for 3146 thousand tonnes; 4786 thousand tonnes out of a total of 5088 thousand tonnes in 1971-72, and 4851 thousand tonnes out of 5024 thousand tonnes in 1972-73. In contrast, only 1912 thousand tonnes out of a total production of 34101 thousand tonnes of rice was procured in 1970-71 from eight states put together: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Procurement of rice in 1971-72 from all these states was 1969 thousand tonnes out of their total production of 34805 thousand tonnes; and 1504 thousand tonnes in 1972-73 out of 31717 thousand tonnes. Clearly, the government's procurement programme was centred mostly on wheat which constituted 48 per cent of total cereal procurement in 1970-71, 57 per cent in 1971-72, and 65 in 1972-73. The share of wheat in total production of cereals was 23 per cent in 1970-71, 25 per cent in 1971-72 and 26 per cent in 1972-73. As against this, the share of rice in total cereal production was about 39 per cent in 1970-71, about 41 per cent in 1971-72, and about 40.5 per cent in 1972-73.

The dominance of wheat is the result of several factors of which three are particularly significant: regionwise concentration in wheat production; price policy; and greater degree of concentration of the bigger surplus producers accompanied by a relatively wider dispersal of the owners of medium-size surplus. Regionwise concentration has already been explained. We have also seen how such concentration necessarily leads to a greater degree of concentration of surplus produce in the hands of big landowners. It is also necessary to note that due to a relatively higher degree of benefits of public investments accruing to the wheat belt (Punjab in particular) a section of middle peasants also benefited in the process though not to the same degree. Thus in this region a section of rich peasants turned landlords, possibly a higher proportion than

elsewhere, and a small number of middle peasants became rich peasants over the years.

Procurement Price Policy

The procurement price offered by the government is abnormally high and keeps on increasing. As a result, a comparatively bigger proportion of surplus (of both big and medium landowners, particularly the latter) is marketed through public procurement. This does not anyhow mean a decline in speculative hoarding. Under the particular conditions obtaining, the proportion of surplus sold to the government is higher. But viewed in absolute terms, a substantial quantity of surplus is still left in private hands for manoeuvring market prices.

Government's dependence on wheat is an essential consequence of the entire process of development of food production, particularly after 1965-66. Government has also offered a higher rate of return to owners of surplus wheat.¹⁵ Nevertheless wheat procurement fell short of the set targets. The reason is not far to seek. In 1971, monthly wheat prices varied between Rs 87 and Rs 97 in Punjab and between Rs 82.50 and Rs 105 in Uttar Pradesh. (See table XVIII). Also, hoarded stocks of the big surplus-holders are released mostly in lean months when maximum prices prevail. Even if we assume that these big surplus-holders sold at the annual average price, their actual per quintal free market return was Rs 58.15 in Punjab and Rs 63.76 in Uttar Pradesh, western Uttar Pradesh in particular. Corresponding annual average price of paddy in Andhra Pradesh was Rs 70, and in Orissa about Rs 72 (Table XVII). That means the per-quintal return in free market was in no way less than Rs 48.42 in Andhra Pradesh and Rs 54.36 in Orissa (All these by the way are gross underestimates.)

Nonetheless in 1973 government raised the procurement price of paddy to Rs 170 per quintal and support price for wheat to Rs 85 per quintal. The rate of return on paddy rose, as a consequence, by about 27 per cent and that on wheat by about 8 per cent. Then came the most valuable free gift—wheat prices were raised to Rs 105 per quintal. The situation however did not improve significantly, though procurement of rice increased by about 2 million tonnes. Finally, government's determination not to raise procurement prices further has not been adhered to. Procurement bonus, a backdoor method of increased payment to surplus-holders, has been recently announced for this year's rabi crop.

Food Consumption in Town and Country

In projecting foodgrain demands generally, estimates are made on the basis of normative calorie intake, and survey data relating to rural and urban consumption. The same assumptions are made in calculating surplus from rural areas. To explain it in simpler terms, it is broadly assumed that the rural population consumes a certain quantity (at a certain rate of grammes of cereals per day) and the difference, between total net

TABLE XVII
MOVEMENT OF MONTHLY WHOLESALE PRICES OF RICE, 1971

	(Rs per quintal)														
Andhra Pradesh	87.00	91.00	94.00	94.00	103.00	107.00	110.00	120.00	125.00	130.00	89.00	104.00			
Bihar	131.00	131.00	128.00	130.00	135.00	135.00	142.00	134.00	120.00	110.00	120.00	129.00			
Kerala	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00	96.00			
Gujarat	110.00	110.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	115.00	110.00	110.00	102.00	108.00			
Haryana	105.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	92.00	96.00			
Madhya Pradesh	92.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	98.00	95.00	97.00			
Karnataka	100.00	100.00	108.00	103.00	112.00	103.00	112.00	118.00	118.00	112.00	109.00	108.00			
Orissa	90.00	95.00	108.00	115.00	110.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	115.00	112.00	106.00			
Punjab	150.00	150.00	145.00	145.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00	149.00			
Uttar Pradesh	113.87	117.89	112.53	115.21	120.57	129.94	123.24	119.00	109.00	101.00	98.00	114.40			
West Bengal	150.00	153.00	179.50	150.00	139.32	155.00	166.00	160.75	160.75	134.00	134.00	153.11			

NOTE: Prices collected from a selected market in each state.

TABLE XVIII
MOVEMENT OF MONTHLY WHOLESALE PRICES OF WHEAT, 1971

																		(Rs per quintal)
Bihar	110.00	110.00	91.25	87.50	85.00	90.00	100.00	108.00	110.00	112.50	112.50	75.00						
Madhya Pradesh	84.20	86.70	75.90	80.10	82.00	86.00	90.00	89.05	91.85	88.95	96.20	86.94						
Maharashtra	101.00	96.00	95.00	97.00	90.00	93.00	95.00	90.00	92.00	100.00	98.00	96.00						
Punjab	90.00	90.00	90.00	87.00	93.00	94.00	97.00	96.00	94.90	97.90	97.00	93.29						
Rajasthan	94.00	88.70	86.00	82.70	81.55	86.00	90.05	93.75	91.05	100.00	96.00	90.40						
Uttar Pradesh	93.75	100.00	87.50	82.50	88.00	87.00	90.00	87.00	94.00	95.00	105.00	92.27						

NOTE: Prices collected from a selected market in each state.

production and total rural consumption calculated on this basis, is treated as transferable surplus for the urban areas. Obviously this is a ridiculous assumption to make. Consumption of foodgrains, like that of any other commodity is a function of the consumer's income. It is true that food-grain demand does not vary substantially with changing prices or incomes. But if the price is so high that with a given income the consumer cannot purchase food beyond a certain quantity, he just does not consume at all. Even his ability to borrow has its limits, for every rupee borrowed he is made the poorer by the excessive rates of interest.

The poor are in a deprived condition because they do not have enough income either from property owned (if at all) or from selling their labour-power. Estimates of the percentage of population living below the poverty line (per capita monthly income of Rs 20 at 1960-61 prices) vary from about 33 per cent to 70 per cent. To enable all rural inhabitants to consume at the nutritional requirement levels (say 450 grams per day or 164 kilograms per year) their minimum annual income should exceed Rs 246 per person or Rs 1200 per family. The per capita monthly income then works out to Rs 20.50. This would be necessary if we assume an average retail price of Rs 1.50 for a kilogram of cereals. And this level of consumption with the per capita income would be possible only if the entire income is spent on foodgrains. As there are other items of essential consumption, not more than 70 to 75 per cent of the total income can be spent on foodgrains. In that case the minimum income necessary for consuming 164 kilograms of cereals at the aforesaid average price would come to Rs 27.33 per head or Rs 136.65 per family per month, assuming the family size to be 5.

Rural Poor

Obviously, the poor eat much less. This truth is borne out by official estimates of consumption expenditure of different income groups, rural and urban. The rural poor consist mainly of agricultural labourers (with or without land), village artisans and other workers mainly employed in rural services. The wages they earn are abnormally low. In the rural labour market the supply of labour always exceeds demand. It, therefore, is a buyer's market where the price of labour is not determined by the capitalist law of means of subsistence. We have seen earlier how improved farm implements had displaced labour and how the number of ploughs had declined as compared to the number of total agricultural workers, between 1961 and 1966.

What is more, wages vary according to caste. If the labourer is a Harijan, he gets lower wages. This social oppression, apparently without direct economic implications, in practice, takes the form of economic exploitation. At least 50 per cent of the agricultural labourers belong to scheduled castes. In certain parts of the country, for example in Haryana, agricultural labourers are known as *chamars* (the caste name) and in some cases the system of wage payment is still not prevalent: instead they get a

certain fixed share of total produce of the land on which they work, and this share is slightly supplemented if they have their own bullocks and plough for the farming operations. (This obviously cannot operate where the tractor has replaced the plough). In such cases, the real income of the labourer may be enhanced nominally but here too wages are not determined by the capitalist law of the means of subsistence; nor is the concept of necessary or surplus labour time applicable here. Even in areas where wages are somewhat higher and paid in cash, the peasant has to buy, at exorbitant prices, anything to supplement what he gets from his land. In most cases, he gives up cultivating his own land—either leasing it out to landlords, or selling it off—since the rate of return from cultivating his own land sometimes is lower than wage earnings for the labour time spent for the purpose. Whether or not this is a significant trend as yet, the fact remains that all the factors of production within the existing property relations and market forces combine against him and his land is ultimately alienated. This trend, of course, is not very uncommon in areas where wage rates are very low, since he sometimes faces a situation where even getting the seed or bullocks for cultivation becomes impossible, particularly in periods of scarcity.

Landless Labour

Most of what has been said so far about poor peasants who are also agricultural labourers applies to the landless agricultural workers. There is a constant influx from landed agricultural labour to landless labour. So long as a worker owns some land, what he can lose is only that possession, the size of which is such that within the existing socio-economic conditions including the modes of exploitation, it does not generally yield much of an income. This is the general position, though there are variations from one region to another. The landless labourer works sometimes on terms of attached or bonded labour, otherwise known as 'farm labour'. His family labour is employed for both agricultural and non-agricultural work, and in exchange he gets a temporary right to homestead land and the produce of a small plot of the landlord which he cultivates himself. He may get a fixed income per month, either in cash or in kind. The payment depends on the employer's relative rates of return. The higher market prices of foodgrains have generally replaced wages in kind by cash payment. But payment in kind still continues in some districts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Analysis of the conditions of life of the bulk of the rural poor is helpful in understanding the food question, including consumption and distribution of foodgrains. The surplus cornered by a minority, the landlords, is distributed through four channels: non-monetized exchange like crop-loans; marketing within the rural areas; marketing in the urban free market; and selling to the government. Which mode of distribution accounts for what proportion of the surplus cannot be ascertained. But two things are clear: the proportion sold to the government is very small,

and smaller in areas other than the three major wheat-producing states; and supply is controlled in both rural and urban markets. The facts that wheat constitutes the bulk of public procurement and that the percentage of market arrivals is higher for wheat clearly indicate that non-monetized exchange in the rural areas is higher in the states other than Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (there is a definite difference between western Uttar Pradesh and the rest of the state).¹⁶ How much of surplus comes to the urban market can be assessed only if we know what proportion of total public procurement comes from the big surplus-owners *and* how much food is actually consumed by the urban population. Both these factors cannot be quantified because reliable data on urban incomes and prices are not available and public distribution neither covers the entire urban population, nor does the government supply the country's consumption needs through the rationing network.

No War on Want

We can only try to get a broad estimate of rural-urban breakup in distribution on the basis of estimated (not actual) normative consumption in both the sectors. In table XIX, a very rough estimate, though not of actual consumption, is presented. We take up the total rural and urban population separately in columns 2 and 5 and calculate their total requirements at the rates of 450 and 360 grams of cereals per day respectively. Thus column 9 gives the total of the two. We divide the rural population into three categories: those who own some surplus (including self-sufficient households) from their land (Column 3); those who have some land but production is insufficient for their needs; and those who theoretically have no land and have therefore to get the entire supply from the market (Column 4). Thus, if everybody were to be given cereals at the normal rates, net additional supply necessary for meeting full requirements of the landless rural population, all urban population plus the deficit of the poor peasants is given in column 15. This is the sum total of columns 8, 13 and 14. It can be *theoretically* called the 'market' demand. The total of two types of surpluses (Column 12) can theoretically constitute total supply. The difference between these two brings out statewide surplus or deficit and the total all-India deficit.

If we relate these to market arrivals and procurement, we can very broadly see how much food is recorded to have been marketed. Since a part of marketed foodgrains comes from poor peasants also, we can take that part of surplus (of surplus-owners) only if it is assumed that the poor peasants had bought at least that much.

There is an overall deficit according to our estimates (Column 16). But was the entire net production actually consumed? The answer is definitely in the negative. In 1971-72, 1.3 million tonnes of cereals were imported and to that was added government stocks. Due to rounding off of fractions, our total net production is slightly higher than the government's total figure. If all these are taken into account, the difference

TABLE XIX
ESTIMATES OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION, 1971-72

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
State	Rural population	Self-sufficient + surplus owning	Non-landed rural population	Urban population	Total population	Normative consumption (rural)	Normative consumption (urban)	Total	Surplus with landlords	Surplus with others	Total surplus	Deficit for rural population	Normative consumption for non-landed rural population	Net supply necessary for landed plus non-landed	Net supply deficit
Andhra Pradesh	35278	7695	757	8442	43720	5785	1109	6894	2382	1603	3985	3375	124	4608	-613
Assam	13736	5285	6	1336	15072	2252	175	2427	323	345	668	1132	1	1308	-640
Bihar	50950	16385	4095	5661	56611	8356	743	9099	1328	2393	3721	4041	672	5456	-2185
Gujarat	19323	6635	2958	7543	26866	3164	991	4155	1496	625	2121	1310	485	2786	-665
Karnataka	22297	7655	1597	7147	29444	3657	939	4596	2047	1007	3054	1486	262	2687	367
Kerala	17986	2070	2101	3487	21473	2950	458	3408	460	117	577	1941	345	2744	-2167
Madhya Pradesh	35087	16010	802	6828	41915	5754	897	6648	3012	1669	4681	2266	132	3295	1386
Maharashtra	34889	7800	5724	15799	50688	5712	2075	7787	1247	584	1831	2775	939	5789	-3958
Orissa	20204	8070	2104	1855	22059	3313	243	3565	1179	771	1950	1174	345	1762	188
Punjab and Haryana	17543	8545	—	6163	23706	2877	809	3686	6936	1507	8443	894	—	1703	6740
Rajasthan	21357	5860	2582	4559	25916	3502	599	4101	1673	852	2525	1236	423	2258	267
Tamil Nadu	28874	8835	—	12527	41401	4735	1646	6381	1822	1867	3689	3069	—	4715	-1026
Uttar Pradesh	76276	34410	—	12437	88713	12509	1634	14143	2107	3650	5757	6294	—	7928	-2171
West Bengal	33430	11325	—	11127	44557	5482	1462	6944	1489	2071	3560	2267	—	3729	-169
Other states	12703	—	—	5978	18681	2083	785	2868	—	—	408	—	—	785	-377
All India	439933	146580	22720	110889	550822	72149	14571	86720	27501	19061	46970	33260	3728	51559	-4589

between total net availability and total consumption needs would become insignificant. But a sizable proportion of the surplus was just not consumed in that year. The proportion marketed was of course smaller than the proportion consumed. The part consumed through non-monetized exchange accounts for the difference. Every single characteristic of the food market—high prices, failure of public procurement, low percentage of market arrivals, repeated increase in procurement prices—proves that there were substantial speculative hoarding and controlled supply. More important, from different survey reports, we have significant information relating to 1970 and 1971, and each one of these proves that income of the rural poor had declined severely, that land owned by them had also decreased sharply, and that the percentage and absolute numbers of the rural poor had gone up sharply.

Alternate Policy

This leads us to the conclusion that increased production of food grains, or any marked increase in net total availability of food in our country has neither brought down the prices nor improved the consumption of the rural poor. On the contrary, both in the lean and fat years of food production, pauperization of the poor continues at an alarming rate. In other words, consumption of foodgrains is not a function of production, except marginally; it is a function of income, prices, and fundamentally of property relations in land. No amount of addition in foodgrain production within the existing agrarian relations, modes of exploitation, and market forces can lead to increased consumption by the rural poor who form the bulk of the country's population. It is of course true at the same time that this itself is a severe constraint on production increase. Already there are reports that a decelerating trend in growth of foodgrain output has started in the green revolution areas, Punjab in particular. Rate of increase in land utilization for expanding the acreage under production has slowed down. Shifting from cultivation of cereals to cash crops has also become rather widespread. The strategy of agricultural development as a part of the overall capitalist path of development is fast reaching its backlash point. It is too late in the day for the Narora Camp participants of the Congress Party to try their recipes.

It is true that an alternate food policy can start a process of improvement if such a policy is in conformity with alternate agrarian relations and genuine land reforms including confiscation without compensation of all land belonging to the landlords, redistribution of land and a democratic credit and marketing policy. But this is a class question, the most crucial class question of the day. Can such an alternate food policy be accepted by the ruling classes? At least one political party has presented an alternate policy: monopoly procurement of all landlords' surplus at prices that are enough to ensure them the socially desirable standard level of consumption; purchase of the marketed produce and surplus of others at higher prices to ensure a minimum level of consumption and resources for

cultivation of their land; sale at cheaper prices to the rural poor; and sale at cheap prices in the urban areas—all through complete takeover of the foodgrain trade.¹⁷ At least one concrete attempt has been made to implement such a policy in one state and ensure democratic distribution and substantially-enhanced consumption.¹⁸ But it is obvious that the ruling classes will never accept or implement such a policy because it seriously attacks the prevailing modes of exploitation and jeopardizes the process of land concentration.

Agrarian Question

During 1951 to 1971, the process of land concentration continued, though ownership of bigger-sized holdings was dispersed among a relatively larger number and percentage of households. This dispersal did not proceed and could not have gone very far. During the same period the percentage of tenant-peasants was going down, and of landless labourers increasing, between 1961 and 1971 at a faster rate than in the preceding decade. We have also seen how the supply of every single factor of production—inputs like HYV seeds, fertilizers, irrigation water, improved farm implements and credit—is determined by the ownership pattern; how the differentiation in their supply leads to further accumulation and concentration of wealth and land (including ownership of multiple-crop area) and pauperization of the peasantry (poor peasantry in particular and a section of the middle peasants).

While production of cereals increased on the whole, the trend of growth has been highly erratic and distorted; in terms of meeting the needs of the country's population, self-sufficiency in production has not been realized; the only crop which accounts for the overall rate of growth of output is wheat; and this peculiarity, a necessary outcome of the entire process of development, has led to regional, cropwise and classwise concentration. Analysis of the distributional aspects has shown how the history of public procurement is a history of failure: the fact of speculative hoarding and price-manipulation by controlled supply in the market; public distribution policy encouraging this; public procurement policy, price policy in particular, operating in favour of traders and landlords; this partly arising out of government's heavy dependence on wheat for public procurement which itself is a consequence of the regional, cropwise concentration; and the government's surrender to landlords manifested in raising procurement prices particularly of wheat from time to time. The question of consumption has also been analyzed in relation to the significant modes of exploitation of the rural poor. The sum total of all these is, and has been, pauperization of the peasantry, along with intensifying concentration of land and wealth. Finally, we have seen why increased food production does not significantly add to the abysmally low level of consumption of the rural poor, and why this has clearly emerged as a fetter on further development itself. The state's almost total bias in favour of landlords, and against the rural poor in particular and the middle

peasantry in general runs like a thread through the whole process.

The agrarian question primarily pertains to the agricultural sector but it also concerns the economy as a whole. The classes which rule, and the classes which are ruled, are identified not only in agriculture but also in industry. When we look at the agrarian question separately, the ruling class, the landlords (who employ wage-labour, and appropriate rent) are particularly identified. That they rule is manifested not only in the nature and size of ownership of their property (or in the fact of their exploiting the peasantry in different ways) but also in the relevant set of state policies that serve landlord interests. That provides the key to the character of state power. In this article, I have not gone into other sectors of the economy. I have not, therefore, tried to specifically identify other classes who also rule. The characterization of state power can be complete only when such identification is made for the entire economy. Other sectors, or the economy as a whole, cannot be adequately studied or understood without first understanding the agrarian question. Study of the food question is basic to the understanding of the agrarian question and there is no point in isolating one from the other.

Facts and Figures

The following facts and figures from the agricultural front are self-explanatory.

1 In Karnataka, the rich farmers' (actually landlords') monthly income (income per consumption unit) rose to Rs 425 at 1970 prices or Rs 149 at 1955 prices from Rs 73 in 1955. The middle peasant's monthly expenditure declined by 10 per cent and his daily calorie intake declined from 2430 to 2240. The poor peasant's income fell by 70 per cent.¹⁹

2 In Ballia district of eastern Uttar Pradesh, population below the poverty line was 85 per cent, and 60 per cent earned less than Rs 500 a year per household²⁰.

3 In Haryana in 1972, 43 per cent of landholdings were below 5 acres as against 19 per cent in 1968. Forty-six per cent of landholdings were of the size of 5.00-9.99 acres, 4 per cent of 30-50 acres, and 2 per cent households owned more than 50 acres each.²¹

4 There were in Karnataka in 1971, 3.55 million operational holdings constituting a total area of 11.36 million hectares; operational holdings below 1 hectare spread over 1.08 million hectares; 2.99 million operational holdings covered 7.55 million hectares of unirrigated land.²²

5 In eastern Uttar Pradesh, 49.1 per cent of 'farm households' owned less than 2.5 acres each, and 86 per cent of households had less than 7.5 acres each²³.

6 In Punjab in 1967-68 and 1968-69, 43 per cent of recipients of bank loans owned above 15 acres of land each, 50 per cent of loan-recipients owned between 5 and 15 acres each, and 5 per cent owned less than 5 acres each.²⁴

7 In West Bengal, the number of agricultural labourers in 1971

was 3.2 million as against 1.7 million in 1961. The number of owner-cultivators fell from 5 million in 1961 to 4 million in 1971. Average annual income of an agricultural labourer was Rs 55 in Birbhum district, and Rs 137 in Jalpaiguri district. The income per member of an agricultural labourer's family fell short by 70 to 90 per cent below the poverty line. Ninety per cent of them were in deep debt—upto Rs 1600 per household. Loans often were repaid by free labour.²⁵

8 Per capita daily earnings of an agricultural labourer in Bankura district of West Bengal was 26 paise in 1970-71, that is, about 95 rupees a year, or less than 8 rupees per month.²⁶

9 Percentages of households which cultivate areas of less than one acre in 1970-71 were 76.2 in Orissa, 73.7 in Uttar Pradesh, 70.7 in Tamil Nadu, 53.1 in Madhya Pradesh, above 30 in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Karnataka, and 6.4 in Punjab.²⁷

10 Jagjivan Ram, the Union Minister for Agriculture has said, "A feeling is growing in the minds of the rural workers that the work for their betterment can only be done by the political parties other than the Congress. And it will be suicidal for the Congress if this impression is reflected throughout the country. As a matter of fact, whether it is Andhra Pradesh or Assam, whether it is Bengal or Bihar, whether it is the *terai* of Uttar Pradesh, whatever work for the rural or agricultural workers has been done, it has been done by the parties other than the Congress Party. So it is necessary in the interest of the Congress Party as a whole that we continue to retain their allegiance".²⁸

11 The Congress president has said, "The Congress does not wish to encourage class conflict".²⁹

(Concluded)

[The author is indebted to Bratati Pande for assistance in tabulation]

¹⁴ Prabhat Patnaik, "Current Inflation in India", *Social Scientist* 30-31, p 32.

¹⁵ See tables V and VI in N Krishnaji, "State Intervention and Foodgrain Prices", *Social Scientist* 30-31, pp 85-86.

¹⁶ In these regions, the modes of exploitation are somewhat—not wholly—different. Historically, the percentage of poor peasants has been relatively lower in Punjab and Haryana and since late sixties monetization took place at a higher rate. This partly explains greater market arrivals in these states. Of course, the percentage of poor peasants and landless labourers in these two states has been rising sharply during the last 7 or 8 years. See conclusion of this article.

¹⁷ Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), September, 1974.

¹⁸ Promode Dasgupta, *Congress Srishta Khadya Sankat Samadhaner Path Ki* (in Bengali) (What is the Solution of the Congress-made Food Crisis?)

¹⁹ *The Hindu*, April 8, 1974, quoted from Report of the Karnataka Bureau of Economics and Statistics.

²⁰ *Financial Express*, May 31, 1974.

²¹ *The Tribune*, October 16, 1974.

²² *The Hindu*, October 6, 1974, quoted from Census 1971.

²³ *The Economic Times*, October 30, 1974.

²⁴ *The Economic Times*, October 6, 1974.

²⁵ *Times of India*, October 21, 1974.

²⁶ Reports on the economic conditions of agricultural workers etc., West Bengal, 1973.

²⁷ *National Sample Survey*, 25th Round (June 70-July 71); see also Narora Background Paper No 3.

²⁸ Speech of Jagjivan Ram at AICC Narora Congress Camp, Background Paper No 3.

²⁹ Introduction to Background Paper No 3.

S C VARMA

Jaya Prakash Narayan's Politics

THIS SCRUTINY of the nature of Jaya Prakash Narayan's politics is intended primarily to highlight the sad but irrefutable fact that it is the government which has itself provided work—and plenty of it—to him and his allies by its own acts of omission and commission flowing from its specific class character and secondly, to encourage an intelligent and informed discussion of Jaya Prakash's line through a conceptual analysis.

Two things must however be stated at the outset. First, I am not concerned here with JP's personality, nor am I going to trace his political views to (his) character or personality traits, for that would land me in the Freudian swamp of psychologism. Second, I am also not concerned with JP's current movement as such though I will say a word on its significance towards the end of the article.

The apologists of the existing economic-political system cite the Directive Principles of State Policy, 'democratic' elections, abolition of zamindari system, nationalization of (some) banks and insurance, abolition of privy purses, and 'garibi hatao' as the 'revolutionary' achievements of the government. But this only shows that the Establishmentwallas have failed to distinguish between form and content on the one hand, and have fallen into our rulers' conceptual trap of confusing 'revolution' with 'reformism' on the other, totally missing the elementary fact that while

reformism is basically meant not to promote but check revolution, 'welfare statism' is nothing but reformed and, thereby, strengthened capitalism.

However, if for argument's sake I accept the government supporters' line of reasoning, then how are they going to account for the deepening poverty of the working and peasant classes, mounting unemployment, widening gulf between the rich and the poor, lengthening shadow of famine and—let us face it—starvation deaths (of persons belonging to "weaker" sections), expanding parallel economy of black money of the political leadership-bureaucracy-businessmen combine, absolute scarcity of basic necessities of life for the broad masses of our people, and miserable failure of land reforms (all this after 25 years of 'developmental' state planning and massive foreign 'aid!'), coupled with revolting corruption and distortion of our 'democratic' electoral processes by money power (which has turned the elections into a Himalayan fraud, as in all bourgeois democracies of the world) and increasing repression of mounting popular—that too peaceful—protest? I fervently hope that these apologists of the status quo will not tell me that all this has happened because of the ineffectiveness of the loop, or some such thing; and if they refer to the evil designs of vested interests (both internal and foreign), then how have these vested interests been able not only to survive but become invincible in the present set-up since independence? And how is it that not the public sector but private monopoly capital (in collaboration with foreign monopoly houses) is today occupying the 'commanding heights' of our economy in complete violation of the declared economic policy of the state? How very 'revolutionary'!

Mass Action Strategy

It follows that no person in his proper senses can find fault with most of JP's declared goals as such (for example, removal of corruption, electoral reform, lowering of prices, change in education system and eradication of unemployment). Further, his avowed strategy of "mass action" is also perfectly legitimate and democratic, for democratic action is, by definition, mass action (though the converse is not necessarily true on account of the fact that the mass or democratic character of a political action or movement is not determined by the sheer number of people involved in it but by the specific class interests which it fundamentally serves).

Hence Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's sweeping observation in her letter to Acharya Kripalani, that "the doctrine of mass action is incompatible with the spirit of representative democracy" is highly objectionable for being anti-democratic or elitist. And may I ask: whose "representative" our "democracy" really is? Indira Gandhi's observation fully confirms the correctness of Frantz Fanon's incisive comment on the ruling leadership of many newly independent countries of the Third World:

Before independence, the leader generally embodies the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty and national dignity.

But as soon as independence is declared, far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader will reveal his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitutes the national bourgeoisie . . . His contact with the masses is so unreal that he comes to believe that his authority is hated and that the services he has rendered his country are being called in question. The leader judges the ingratitude of the masses harshly, and every day that passes ranges himself a little more resolutely on the side of the exploiters . . . The leader pacifies the people . . . The leader, because he refuses to break up the national bourgeoisie, asks the people to fall back into the past and to become drunk on the remembrance of the epoch which led up to independence. *The leader, seen objectively, brings the people to a halt and persists in either expelling them from history or preventing them from taking root in it. During the struggle for liberation the leader awakened the people and promised them a forward march, heroic and unmitigated. Today he uses every means to put them to sleep.*² (Emphasis added).

Politics of Discontent

Compatible or not "with the spirit of representative democracy" the actual line or strategy of political action is in the final analysis determined neither in advance and in abstraction nor in terms of some so called absolute 'moral' or 'ethical' principle (all morality is class morality, serving specific class interests) but by the totality of the concrete, objective situation at a particular time; and the oppressed and the exploited masses have an inalienable right at any time to change the government, to borrow Malcom X's phrase, "by any means necessary"—isn't the government seeking to remain in power by any means necessary?

Then, contrary to our rulers' view, there is also nothing inherently wrong in exploiting popular discontent for 'political' objectives as the discontent is itself rooted in economic-political factors: the crucial point is which forces (fascist or left revolutionary) do exploit this discontent, and by no logic can it be said that any and every opposition party which takes advantage of popular discontent is necessarily fascist and anti-democratic. Has not the ruling party exploited popular discontent for its power objectives? Also to be stressed is the point that it is only when the left revolutionary forces are weak or hesitant that the fascist and anti-revolutionary forces are able to step in and take advantage of popular discontent. As such, by trying to weaken and suppress the left revolutionary forces the government has itself cleared the decks for the right reactionary and fascist forces in the country. This however is nothing surprising, for governments act according to their specific class character; and as history shows, the dividing line between the bourgeois 'democratic' rule itself and fascism does not always remain very sharp.

It is by no means easy to pinpoint and comprehend JP's political

theory, chiefly because he has neither been very precise about it, nor appreciably consistent; in fact he has himself publicly contradicted or soft-pedalled many of his political tenets a number of times, confounding both his critics and supporters. However, the three aspects of JP's political thesis (if it can be so described) which he has quite consistently and persistently stressed recently are: (1) partyless democracy; (2) revolution in one year; and (3) the student vanguard of the revolution. I shall examine these briefly.

Partyless Democracy

The idea (and practice) of "partyless democracy", to the best of my knowledge and understanding, dates back to ancient Greece. The emergence of political parties as the vehicles of politics is a modern phenomenon; and democracy in its modern sense and style implies the participation of the "commoners" or masses through formally organized political party or parties (two or more). History and theory apart, JP's idea of partyless democracy (of all partyless politics, in fact) is attributable to his total disillusionment with party politics as it has unfolded itself in post-independence India. It is largely a power game or raffle, of a very cynical and emotional kind (which is partly responsible for the growing multiplicity of political parties, the other reason being the growing contradictions in our society in general and ruling feudal-bourgeois class in particular), coupled with the corrupting influence of big money in party-managed elections as in all bourgeois democracies of the world.

JP also seems to partly subscribe to Michels' "Iron Law of Oligarchy", to which 'law' no party—howsoever democratic and revolutionary at the start—is, "we are told, an exception. To quote Michels: "It is organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization says oligarchy";³ or as Moisai Ostrogorski puts it: "As soon as a party, even if created for the noblest object, perpetuates itself, it tends to degeneration"⁴, that is, to bureaucracy and deradicalization. I have said "partly", because JP does not accept the Michelsian impossibility of direct government by the masses.

This is no occasion to fully examine Michels' thesis, but it must be noted that some "Marxists" in the West have also taken the same line, perhaps on the basis of their experience of the established Moscow-oriented communist parties. However, it is one thing to warn, guard and struggle against the growth of bureaucratic tendencies in the party (say, through a "cultural revolution" after the political revolution as in China) and quite another to deny the very necessity of a (worker-peasant) party for revolution. The latter would clearly be an anti-Marxist-Leninist line, a line which shall completely undermine the worker-peasant struggle against the feudal-bourgeois oppression and exploitation (which, and not corruption and electoral maladies, is the central and fundamental issue). It is true that under certain conditions a 'broad front' may become necessary, but

broad front cannot mean the dissolution of the Marxist worker-peasant party.

Hence no Marxist-Leninist can accept JP's somewhat anarchist "partyless democracy" theory. Even Fidel Castro, who initially took the "foco" line, is now carrying the revolution forward through a well-organized (communist) party though even the "foco" tactic had not ruled out all "organization" and professional (full-time, trained and tightly disciplined) revolutionaries. As for Michels, he is of course an anti-Marxist and anti-socialist thinker, whose thesis, incidentally, is in a way echoed in Milovan Djilas's *The New Class*. No wonder, Michels is so well received and Djilas has become an instant best-seller in the bourgeois intellectual circles of the world.

Instant Revolution

The call of "revolution in one year" is obviously based upon JP's faith in "spontaneity". That is, the call, by implication, denies the Marxist-Leninist necessity of spending any time over theory and over organizing a revolutionary party (for the reason given above) to conduct the revolution on the one hand and neglects the factor of the "ripeness of the situation" (for revolution) on the other, a factor which is treated as very vital to revolution by all genuine revolutionaries.

Again, this is no occasion to go into the details of the "ripeness of the situation" principle, but JP's call of "revolution in one year" is patently romantic. For, revolution, to be precise, is no instant coffee; and though it calls for the highest degree of personal heroism and spirit of sacrifice on the one hand and constant innovation, initiative and adaptation on the other, revolution is not a matter of sheer will power (voluntarism), individual courage and leadership. Secondly, revolution is not a matter of a fixed time-table or some kind of a time-bound programme, a fact which JP himself must have noted by now.

No doubt, Che Guevara holds that "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them"; but he also says that "it is not to be thought that *all* conditions for revolution are going to be created through the *impulse* given to them by guerrilla activity." (Emphasis added). Not only this, Che further stresses three conditions as a "necessary minimum", which "must always be kept in mind", namely: (i) peoples' clear perception of the futility of maintaining the fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate; (ii) total loss of peoples' faith in "popular vote, fraudulent or not" and in the "constitutional legality" or legitimacy of the government; and (iii) mass support, specially of the rural masses in the Third World countries.⁵ The point is, even guerrilla warfare, contrary to popular impression, follows certain definite laws and stages, and to ignore them is to invite the charge of petty-bourgeois left adventurism. Revolutionaries cannot ignore these laws except at their own peril.

The idea of student (and lumpen-proletariat) vanguardship of

revolution is rooted in (i) two much publicized and inter-related theories, namely the "embourgeoisement of the working class" and the "end of ideology" (of economic-political extremism, to be precise), on the one hand, and in (ii) the belief in the inherent revolutionism of the youth, on the other. To this must be added JP's apparent distrust of and belief in the alleged "apathy" or "fatalism" of the Indian working and peasant classes.

Revolutionary Vanguard

The above point is about the most important of the three, and may therefore be examined at some length. To begin with, the embourgeoisement-end-of-ideology thesis pertains to the highly 'developed' and affluent capitalist countries of the West, chiefly the USA, but there too it is questionable on empirical grounds. Thus, for example, it must be noted that massive waves of industrial strikes are frequently sweeping these so called developed countries. The 'white collar' has been no guarantee against the militancy of the working class. The high "standard of living" of the working class has neither meant their liberation from wage slavery and alienation or dehumanization nor has the life-style equivalence resulted in any real status equivalence (as reflected, say, in marriage, education and social mixing) of the working class people with the members of the owning ruling class. With all its much advertised and seductive affluence, the American capitalist system is still irrational: for example, thousands of Americans (specially the Negroes) live below the poverty line while thousands of acres of land are deliberately left uncultivated and tonnes of wheat destroyed to keep the prices from falling. The American society is not that "open" (in terms of "social mobility", which happens to be the sole yardstick of bourgeois "social stratification" theorists to measure classlessness) as made out by its apologists; "middle class society" is very much a capitalist society at a certain stage of its development; and the "middle class" (which, in fact, is an income category) is a part of the working class, as one's class position is an objective fact, not a matter of income and consciousness or self-identification, as assumed by bourgeois sociologists.

Above all, Bell and Lipset's end-of-ideology thesis is itself an ideology, that of bourgeois statusquoism, to be precise. As Harrington puts it, the "end of ideology" is a "shorthand way of saying the end of socialism"; and the need in the Third World countries like India is the beginning of ideology. This thesis also claims that the problems of 'developed' capitalist societies are no longer political but purely technical and that, therefore, all "structural criticism" is pointless. But, as shown above, this is a most misleading view of the objective reality; and to quote Alvin Gouldner: "To limit judgment solely to 'autonomous' technical criteria is in effect not only to allow but to require men to be moral cretins in their technical roles"⁷.

As regards the new-found belief in the inherent radicalism of the

youth, I think radicalism has nothing to do with chronological age as such: for example, Bertrand Russell, to say nothing of Marx and Lenin, was in certain respects more radical even in his advanced age than many a young person of his time or, for that matter, of today; and often a Hitler rises to power on the shoulders of young storm troopers. It is basically a matter of one's ideological or political commitment (which, of course, does not arise in a vacuum) and training. As such, youth in general and students in particular can become an instrument of revolutionary (that is fundamental or total) change only if they participate in the politics of revolutionary forces, that is, forces which are concretely and demonstrably fighting for the oppressed and exploited classes. Given a sound historical sense and radical political commitment, it is not difficult to correctly identify such forces. Incidentally "radicalism" means "going to the root", and I am afraid JP is not going to the root of our problems.

Role of Classes and Intellectuals

As for JP's apparent lack of confidence in the working and peasant classes, it betrays a certain amount of elitism characteristic of all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals and their revolutionism. Further, it also betrays his uncritical acceptance of the image of the Indian peasantry as drawn by bourgeois social scientists, both Indian and foreign, chiefly American. In any case, if JP's pessimistic view of the Indian working and peasant classes is correct, then is it not the very function of the revolutionaries to awaken and activate them? For it must be noted that even Herbert Marcuse treats the revolutionism of the Third World proletariat as a vital aid to revolution in the developed and affluent capitalist countries of the West.

It is true that Mao Tse-tung does enjoin upon the party to enlist large numbers of intellectuals (after thorough screening, of course), making a distinction between "intellectuals who serve the landlords and the bourgeoisie and those who serve the working class and peasantry".⁸ But Mao by no means treats the intellectuals as the main revolutionary force. Revolution, he says, cannot be won "by relying only on the contingent of young intellectuals and students."⁹ In fact, closely following the Marxist-Leninist principle of the unity of theory and practice, Mao, on the one hand, stresses the necessity of giving "political education and guidance" to the intellectuals so that "they gradually overcome their weakness, revolutionize their outlook, identify themselves with the masses...", and, on the other, urges "worker and peasant cadres to study hard and raise their cultural level." For "thus worker and peasant cadres will at the same time become intellectuals, while the intellectuals will at the same time become workers and peasants".¹⁰ Evidently, any other view of the intellectuals and students and of their role in revolution cannot be regarded as genuinely revolutionary: it must be treated as diversionary, howsoever revolutionary the rhetoric of those who hold a contrary view might be.

The three political tenets discussed above broadly represent the New Left line sired by C Wright Mills and nurtured by the Frankfurt school (of "critical social theory") of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Ralf Dahrendorf, Erich Fromm et al. It may therefore be contended that JP is wittingly or unwittingly following the New Left line (which, in certain respects, is quite close to Trotskyism) like many intellectual and student radicals of western capitalist countries. This he is of course doing with his Sarvodaya touch (Sarvodaya, contrary to popular impression, is not a-political), but that too broadly conforms to the New Left and "critical social theory" radicalism, which has largely tended to minimize the importance of class (as defined by Marxism) factor, depoliticize conflict, concentrate on the cultural superstructure and view culture (consciousness, morals, values) change as the basic source of all social change, as done by the protagonists of counter culture. Evidently such 'radicalism' is based not on the revolutionary historical-materialist but deceptive and diversionary idealist-psychological conception of "root". Hence, for example, JP is highlighting "corruption" and electoral maladies with practically not a word on their feudal-bourgeois economic foundation or origins, that is, the class character of state power in India. In fact, how 'Marxist' the New Left line really is, is amply revealed by the very title of the well-known student activist Cohn-Bendit's widely-publicized book, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*.

Tweedledum and Tweedledee

The New Left in general and "student power" in particular have in any case been able to achieve practically nothing by way of structural or systemic change in the capitalist world. It is therefore quite necessary for the New Left camp to do some serious rethinking on its theoretical and action line, if it has not already started doing so. Bluntly put, the New Left (and JP) would do well to note the historical fact that the intellectuals and students—the entire "middle class" in fact—can at best be the assistants of revolution, not its vanguard. Further, to shun class conflict is to shun the very lever of all revolutionary change, from the existing feudal-bourgeois to socialist system in the present case. Hence the fact that both the ruling party and JP are frankly opposed to the class confrontation line is enough to make me reject the radical and revolutionary claims of both as empty and misleading.

Finally, a word on JP's movement. It is evidently but an in-fight of the ruling feudal-bourgeois class, an in-fight born of the growing inner contradictions in the face of the deepening crisis of our economic system, and JP, as indicated earlier, is the best safety valve of the existing economic-political *system*, whatever be his rhetoric of "total revolution". As such, it is patently stupid and utterly misleading to pose and debate the issue in terms of choice between Indira Gandhi's government and JP's movement; also, it is time one stopped thinking and acting in terms of choosing the lesser evil, which is statusquoism plain and simple.

NOTES

Marxism and Indian Sociology

THERE appears to be a general presumption among Indian sociologists that Marxism and sociology are two different and mutually irreconcilable modes of looking at society. This note examines the various reasons to which this notion is supposedly attributed in Indian sociological circles. In this endeavour it seems relevant to take up an authoritative work as a starting point. There is perhaps no other as representative as Andre Beteille's recent exposition on the subject.¹

Beteille presupposes a real and rigid distinction between Marxists and sociologists, as if they belong to two separate races. The distinction, though convenient, is not so sharp and clear in the Indian context. There are many intellectuals who identify themselves with both Marxism and sociology. The explication of criteria for identifying who is a Marxist and who is a sociologist should precede any such debate if it is to avoid confusion. Lacking this, I assume the utility of such analytical distinction as maintained by Beteille but only at the hypothetical level.

Beteille opens his essay by expressing disgust over the reaction faced by the bourgeois academic sociologist from the practising Marxist when the former turns to the study of "such subjects as social organization of production, the agrarian class structure or peasant movements and associations".²

He presumes that "there (is) in India, as elsewhere...a vast seed-bed of mutual hostility and suspicion between Marxists and sociologists"³. But he does not make any concrete exposition of the mode and nature of manifestation of this antipathy except stating that "Marxists are quite willing to tolerate sociology as long as it confines itself to the problems of superstructure".⁴

It seems that Beteille's views are based on the criticisms levelled by Indian Marxist intellectuals against sociology for its particular focus on the society and its exploitation by vested class interests. As is well known, Marxism aims at providing a scientific study of society from a class angle. With the experience of European exploitation of Asian and African colonies and the role of social anthropologists therein, such criticisms fall within the realm of social criticism which can be employed to give a conscious

goal to social sciences and to see that academic and theoretical fields are not exploited by vested interests.

While viewing Beteille's perception of the relationship between Marxism and sociology can we afford to ignore the Beteillean mode of theorization of this relationship? To Beteille, "the mutual intolerance of Marxists and sociologists owes itself to the basic similarities of their projects rather than to their basic differences"⁵ and "there is in the realm of ideas...what the anthropologist describes as sibling rivalry".⁶ Nobody can deny that such reductionism sidetracks the vital issues and is conducive to the creation of confusion in attempting to demarcate the areas of disagreement and the potential of a mutually beneficial relationship between Marxism and Indian sociology.

From my own experience of discussions and association with them it is my understanding that Indian Marxists welcome the development of social sciences which do not distort social reality to suit the designs of vested interests in the country or abroad. It is true that establishment social science has become an object of suspicion in the eyes of Indian Marxists especially due to its failure to bring to light the realities of class exploitation and deteriorating conditions of the working masses of India. Marxists' criticisms do not stem from a sense of envy of 'development' of sociology but are centred on practical questions of commitment to changes leading up to a classless society.

Myth of Value-free Social Science

Beteille rules out the possibility of the integration of Marxism and Indian sociology by asserting that

for thirty years Indian Marxists have had a zealous attachment to the Soviet Union...Several factors have been responsible for the disenchantment with Soviet society, but the most important of these, at least among younger Marxists in India, is the emergence of a more romantic alternative in China...The sociologist only demands that all societies—American, British, Chinese, Soviet as well as Indian—be viewed in the same cold, clear light...Marxists have...always treated one society—whether Soviet or Chinese—as a privileged exception. Sociology insists on treating all societies alike...This must in the end bring the sociologist into conflict with those who have a zealous attachment to some particular society, whether their own or another.⁷

Beteille's sole reason for Marxists' incompetence to make a scientific study of society appears to be the alleged bias of viewing a particular type of society with 'attachment'. In the absence of any sociological data to substantiate his observations it becomes quite difficult to say whether this 'attachment' phenomenon in fact exists or not. It will be interesting to make a study of Marxists' and official sociologists' identification with different types of social systems. An overwhelming majority of sociologists and social anthropologists have tended to view status quo and stability as either ideal or desired conditions of a society.

Whereas the Weberian notion of value-freedom has found favour with sociologists, there are logical reasons as well as experience of reality of the social science to suggest the exact opposite. For instance, the precept that social science could and should be value-free is a myth, according to Alvin Gouldner, a myth created by Weber.⁸ T S Simey observes:

It must be made plain, then, that values are deeply influential in the lives and work of sociologists, who are, in fact, far from being the 'objective' scientists the positivists would suppose. A recent account of a survey of the opinions of the members of the American Sociological Association has shown rather surprising results. As the authors say, 'sociology as a science is often said to be value-free', but most sociologists do not believe this to be true; 73% of the 3,440 sociologists who completed the questionnaire agreed with the statement that most of their colleagues merely paid lip-service to the 'ideal of being value-free': 66.9% also agreed that 'as teachers, sociologists can express their personal values to students'. So far as the depth and breadth of sociology are concerned, 84.8% agreed that 'in designing research, it is at least as important to be inventive as it is to be rigorous', and 91% voted in favour of the statement that 'the sociologist, like any other intellectual, has the right and duty to criticize contemporary society', whilst 85% favoured the statement that the sociologist should not only think about communicating to his professional colleagues, but he should also attempt to speak to a wider public.⁹

Question of Intellectual Honesty

No observer is free from biases, even in the physical sciences, but a fairly accurate view of the physical world has emerged from research. What we need in social sciences is not some ego-satisfying myth like value-freedom but a sober understanding of the reality of our methods¹⁰ which can yield a scientific understanding of society.

Marxists demand an objective picture of social reality undistorted by class prejudices. All classes, it is true, distort reality where it contradicts their exploitative interests. The working class is not an exploiting class. Therefore, its perspective does not suffer from the limitations imposed by such conscious distortions.

Marxism does impart a set of value orientations but this limitation is not peculiar to Marxist intellectuals, and is shared probably to a greater extent by students adopting other approaches to society. In this respect, even if it is assumed that Beteille's attitude towards Indian Marxists is correct, Marxists do not make a start from a premise which may be regarded as disadvantageous, when compared to official sociologists, in making an objective study of society. The attitude that Marxism gives a place of pride to Soviet or Chinese society is, to say the least, definite antipathy and nothing but the manifestation of a deep prejudice hardly expected of an intellectual claiming to be devoted to the scientific study of society.

Sociologists like Beteille would include an administrator, or even a

Christian missionary, into their community of social scientists, but not a Marxist even if he is trained within their own disciplines. They think that a practising Marxist is no longer a social scientist, he becomes a politician or something even worse. This strange pattern of behaviour of sociologists can be attributed only to the contrasting structure of interests to which the two categories of social sciences are committed: one to the official status quo and the other to a socialist transformation.

Marx was a politician and so are the Marxists. In fact it is impossible to imagine Marxism without politics. But politics as Marx perceived it is not politics in the conventional or even the sociologist's conception of it. As Leibknecht wrote,

Marx treated politics as a science. Pothouse politicians and politics he loathed...History is the product of all the forces active in man and in nature, of human thought, human passions and human needs...As a theory, politics is the knowledge of the millions and billions of factors spinning on the spinning wheel of time, and as a practice it is action based on that knowledge. Politics is therefore, a science and an applied science.¹¹

It is a fact of history that science originated from certain necessities of society but it did not stop advancing, for instance, with the invention of the steam engine. Beyond a certain stage all science ceases to be based on need. It continues as a quest for the ultimate truth. This is as true of Marxism as of European anthropology which incidentally was triggered off by the need for firmer subjugation of colonial people. Perhaps Beteille himself will admit that Fei Hsio-tung¹², who is still active in the field of sociology in the People's Republic of China, can stand any test of academic honesty that sociologists would expect him to.

Lack of Dialogue or Evasion of Fact?

Beteille observes that

academic sociology (including social anthropology) was introduced into India from Britain and America at a time when there was in these countries an almost complete separation between Marxism and sociology. It can be argued though only up to a point, that the prevailing separation between sociology and Marxism in India is an unfortunate by-product of the same inheritance.¹³

With the reservation that this perspective of analyzing the relationship as single-faceted and thus incomplete in itself, I am for once in agreement with Beteille.

An illustration of the influence of inheritance of the mode of sociology practised by Indian sociologists can be seen in their rejection of Marx in toto without subjecting the basic tenets of Marxism to severe test in terms of its heuristic, conceptual or explanatory value for a realistic social science. The most common tendency is to pass on the views of European sociologists like Raymond Aron, Ralf Dahrendorf and Mannheim as belonging to the tradition of Marxist sociology and to label it as irrelevant in the

Indian context. All the sociologists named are recognized within the European intellectual world to be anti-Marxists.

As for Beteille's view that there is a lack of serious debate between Marxism and Indian sociology, perhaps what he implies is that Indian Marxists have not critically responded to the sociologists' criticisms of Karl Marx and what they had been passing off as Marxism.

In spite of the fact that the communist movement was operating underground from 1948 to 1951 followed by periods of repression and illegality, the Marxist approach to Indian social structure is available in a number of treatises. Notable among these are the works of D D Kosambi, E M S Namboodiripad, K M Ashraf, Irfan Habib, Godavari Parulekar and many others including Marxist analysts from overseas. Despite the empirical richness and theoretical rigor of the works, these have been systematically ignored by official Indian sociology¹⁴. Therefore, it is not a question of dialogue but a deliberate evasion of fact by official Indian sociology, pretending that there is no scientific path other than the one it has been pursuing. Official sociologists have accorded recognition, however reluctantly, to Marxism, not because of their scientific development; growing mass movements have pushed them to take notice of the Marxist perspective, and distort it.

A Beginning Perhaps?

No doubt it is true that Indian Marxists were by and large indifferent to the disciplines of sociology and social anthropology in the formative periods of these disciplines, except for a few sporadic counter-attacks. At present, however, the crystallization of Marxist leanings in Indian social sciences has accelerated and a serious confrontation between Marxist and official tendencies is not very far off. In the *Social Scientist*, for instance, a number of criticisms have been levelled against the type of sociology practised by Indian sociologists. Methodological as well as ideological, these criticisms centre on the interests of 'official social science' and Marxist social science and were made by Marxists trained in sociology and social anthropology at British, American and Indian universities.

Such criticisms do form the basis of a serious and effective debate between Marxism and contemporary Indian sociology, and also provide material for critical self-appraisal of Indian sociology. This self-criticism shall be in line with what Zaner terms as the spirit of phenomenal sociology.¹⁵ Such criticisms are also in line with the spirit of scientific study which is claimed to be the aim of Indian sociology. But unfortunately the response from sociologists has been practically non-existent. It is high time that a serious dialogue on the relevance of Marxism to contemporary Indian sociology manifests itself and sets off a process of rigorous testing and evaluation, culminating in the opening of hitherto unexplored frontiers of social science.

Assuming lack of any dialogue between Marxism and Indian sociology, Beteille poses the problem in terms of three possible 'orientations' on

the relationship between Marxism and sociology. He exemplifies these three orientations on the basis of the methodological debate in Euro-American intellectual world.

The first orientation is that "Marxism provides the basic framework which can retain its fundamental character while absorbing the more fruitful findings of sociology ... The clearest expression of the first point of view is to be found in the writings of contemporary Soviet sociologists."¹⁶ Beteille explains:

... two features of Soviet sociology ... call for comment. The first is the pragmatic attitude towards the distinction between Marxist and bourgeois sociology: while it is stressed in principle, it is frequently ignored in practice. The second and much more significant feature is a new way of viewing the relationship between 'base' and 'superstructure'. Soviet sociologists are increasingly arguing that there are various areas of social life that are not covered properly by either, and are best characterized as 'extra-superstructural' ... Whether this way of representing social reality is a deviation from Marxism or an extension of it, I leave it to the specialists to decide.¹⁷

Dogmatic and Reductionist?

Although Beteille does not make explicit any comment over the development and the nature of sociology in USSR (he feels no need to consider sociology and other social sciences in China and other socialist countries!) it is obvious from what he says that he has not been able to resist the temptation of leaving the impression that Marxism is dogmatic and reductionist in essence. He appears to think that if the Russians have developed Marxist social science it is primarily due to the external influence of 'developed' Western sociology and that Marxism may be the ideal, not the practice, of Soviet sociology.

The tendency among contemporary Indian sociologists (and Beteille is no exception) is to presume that the very term Marxism implies something 'dogmatic' and perhaps their antagonism to Marxism is primarily based on this presumption. Engels wrote, "Nature is the proof of dialectics"¹⁸ Apart from methodological considerations, Marxist revolutionary orientation denies the role of any dogmatism or sectarianism in the working-class movement.¹⁹

Regarding the question of Marxian philosophical categories like 'base' and 'superstructure', all one needs to mention is that 'categories' are analytical tools to conceptualize social phenomena. Although Marx gave these two important categories, Marxism per se does not exclude the possibility of a number of categories being created to conceptualize or explain the diversity and complexity of social phenomena. Beteille's question whether an addition of a third category by Soviet sociology should be regarded as a deviation or an extension of Marxism is irrelevant. In fact, Marxism does not exclude the possibility of creation of more than two categories.

The very course of development of Marxist sociology in the USSR indicates the fallacy of the view that Marxism is dogmatic. Marxism does not essentially imply a Procrustean or biased outlook. It endeavours to view society in totality and not in terms of arbitrary watertight divisions. The Procrustean attitude is rather more characteristic of a number of prevalent perspectives in sociology and social anthropology. If Marxism can provide a comprehensive framework for the study of society in its ramifications without being dogmatic or reductionist in Soviet Russia, then the basic presumption of Marxism being dogmatic is fallacious. Rather the rejection of Marxism in toto without testing scientifically the utility of its fundamental tenets cannot be regarded as anything but the myopic vision of Indian sociology inherited in the tradition of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim.

I cannot believe that Beteille is ignorant of the fundamental orientations of Marxism. Whether he is trying consciously to present reality in a distorted form merely trying to escape from being branded as a deviationist by official sociology, it is difficult to decide.

Range of Study

"The second orientation, which gives to the ideas of Marx a position of importance within sociology, has governed the works of a long line of European scholars from Weber through Mannheim to Aron"²⁰.

In the discussion of this orientation, Beteille has come up quite clearly with his bias against Marxism and in favour of Weberian methodology which has dominated Beteille's work from "Caste, Class and Power" to "The Studies in Agrarian Social Structure." He himself professes this bias: "The task of sociology, as I see it, is to study the dialectical relationship between ideas and interests, or between the fundamental categories of a society and the distribution of power in it...Among sociologists who wrote in the present century, Weber's work is perhaps the best example of these fundamental concerns".²¹ Then, in the context of Karl Marx and Marxism, Beteille asserts:

From our point of view the first thing to remember is that Marx wrote primarily about particular societies—Germany, France and England—and a particular social transformation. Asian societies in a state of transition a hundred years after Marx's time have their own mode of existence and consciousness. How can we hope to grasp these if, like theologians, we attach ourselves obstinately to the theories, concepts and methods embedded in a given set of texts?²²

Beteille's reservations on the utility of Marxism within Indian sociology are based upon certain notions prevalent in the culture of Indian sociology and social anthropology which need to be cleared of their mythical content.

The notion that Marx did not consider societies other than Germany, France and England is a myth which has surprisingly survived to the present day. His writings on India, Persia, China, Afghanistan, Algeria

and other regions reflect the deep interest of Karl Marx in various sections of mankind. As a matter of fact, Marx's data span greater periods of time and pertain to more diverse geographical locations than those of any contemporary of later students of society.

The empirical richness, theoretical rigour and practical concerns make Marx's writings on India monumental.²³ A reading of Marx's writings and published correspondence²⁴ with Engels reveal the interest of the two scholars in various domains of the socio-political matrix of India, including rural social organization, economic exploitation by the British and the consequences of legislative and other changes like ryotwari and zamindari systems despite the limited availability of reliable information.

The notion that Marx studied only one social transformation is again a misconception. It is a fact that he witnessed only one social transformation, namely, the rise and development of capitalism. But he did attempt to understand the transformation in terms of its historical ramifications. Even a cursory examination of the voluminous literature by Marx and Engels reinforces the view that their range of study was not so narrow²⁵ as is alleged by many sociologists like Beteille.

Anti-Marxist Ideologies

Another contextual distortion that has crept into Beteille's exposition is that while he has taken the trouble to put forward the stand of anti-Marxists like Aron, Weber and Mannheim, he has ignored the writings of European sociologists Georg Gurvitch and Emmanuel Terray²⁶ who have argued strongly for giving Karl Marx a position of esteem in sociology and social anthropology and also tried to eliminate certain misconceptions about Marxism prevalent in the European intellectual circles.

Concerning Beteille's fear of Marx's method and its application becoming a hindrance to the scientific development of Indian sociology one only needs to say that "nobody was more against vulgarizing science, that is, falsifying and stultifying it, than Marx was."²⁷ In the case of Karl Marx, the founder of scientific study of society, in contradistinction to the then prevailing idealist, metaphysical and positivist philosophies, the basic thrust was superbly critical in a comprehensive manner and Marxism was never intended to become a dogma to be accepted in toto without critical evaluation.

If some self-styled Marxist sociologists have not been able to maintain this spirit of criticism it should not lead logically for anyone to fall back on the idealist, metaphysical, and positivist modes of sociological analysis which, on account of their own distortive tendencies, have not been able to yield any clear understanding of Indian social formations²⁸ and change which could withstand even low level tests of scientific method.

Beteille goes on: "Finally, we come to the third position according to which Marxism and sociology are by their nature irreconcilable...

Among Europeans the view that denies the very possibility of a Marxist sociology is expressed most forcefully by Georg Lukacs and his followers.²⁹

Beteille illustrates Lukacs's position by making use of his book *Histoire et Conscience de Classe*. In view of the fact that Lukacs himself denounced this book of his in later phases of his life, it will be contrary to intellectual ethics to palm off this work as the final views of Lukacs. Among the followers of Georg Lukacs Beteille isolates Lucien Goldman: "both Lukacs and Goldman would reject any attempt to separate judgments of fact from judgments of value as a denial of revolutionary praxis."³⁰

Beteille appears to believe in a value-free status for sociology. This widely claimed posture for sociology has sometimes been equated with 'objectivity', as against the attempts to load the subject matter of the social science with ethical commitments which have been labelled 'subjectivity', to be viewed with contempt as Beteille does.

Sophistry of Objectivism

But now the situation has changed. It is being widely recognized that value-free science, especially social science, is an impossibility, however attractive it may be as an ideal. Various positions can be identified within this rubric. For instance, there is the stand taken by S C Dube, an 'official' sociologist:

To some, commitment is a dirty word. Such reactions can be attributed to a variety of causes. First, many social scientists have a deep-seated but unsuspected ideological bias—a product of their overall as well as academic socialization. Second, some of them are myopic: they are unable to grasp the implications of the fast changes in contemporary realities for the society of tomorrow. A few of us are perhaps victims of our own intellectual lethargy; our thought processes run round set grooves which we make no effort to transcend³¹.

Moreover, as Simey observes, "the segregation of fact from value gives the social scientist a distorted idea of reality".³² The changing position of social sciences in general and the Indian context in particular offer no resistance as the Marxist preoccupation with providing a science for the proletariat and exploited masses is very well accommodated within this changing posture of Indian sociology.

Marxist methodological distinction between 'objectivity' and 'objectivism' is significant. Whereas the former is used to characterize scientific knowledge, the latter characterizes the so called 'impartial' attitude of the theorist in gaining the knowledge of social life, the attitude of an ostensibly disinterested observer of the social scene. The objectivist posture is very often the target for sharp criticism in Marxist approach to the study of society.

It might be asked why social scientists should simultaneously be scientific and concerned with the cause of social transformation. The

answer is that in social sciences there is a constant clash of ideas and interests and so conviction based on knowledge comes to be a factor of more than individual importance and carries social significance. A social scientist might be silent on a moral issue, and his silence might amount to what can be labelled 'pseudo-ethical neutrality'; occasions do arise when this silence lends support to vested interests. The exploitation of this ethical neutral posture in social anthropology by colonial interests is not something which can easily fade from the minds of intellectuals of the Third World. No social scientist should ignore in the spirit of academic integrity and honesty the relation of social science with the socio-political matrix in which it is placed.

Official social sciences cannot flourish in a country like India without patronage from government and other agencies. These agencies very often have their interests for social sciences of a particular kind. There are indications that these interests jeopardize the ideal of 'value-freedom'. It becomes clear when we recall the results of a study made among members of the American Sociological Association. Seventy-three per cent of the 3440 sociologists who completed the questionnaire agreed with the statement that most of their colleagues merely paid lip-service to the ideal of being value-free.³³

Class Interests

Official sociologists may find it difficult to take an open party stand. An objectivist stand is rather much more convenient for official social sciences, not for the scientific development of the discipline but due to the contradictory demands made by the various sections of the milieu in which it is placed. But that should not put them in opposition to other students of society who combine scientific study with commitment towards the cause of social transformation. The problem becomes much more acute when one notes the unsatisfactory state of the research methodology of official sociologists. The so called scientific methodology as practised by contemporary Indian sociologists is revealed upon a critical examination to be conducive to the "presentation of personal world-view and ideology in the attractive cover of social science theory."³⁴

Beteille's rejection of Marxist sociology has another dimension: the question of focus. While discussing the relevance of Lukacs's arguments that sociology "has its basis in the class interests of the bourgeois... Marxism is rooted in the class interests of the proletariat", he notes, "the equation of the organized proletariat with underprivileged humanity, which is implicit in European Marxism, is in the Indian case both false and misleading".³⁵

It is obvious from Beteille's stand of distorting and twisting Marxian conception of society and social goals, that he is not only trying to prove the irrelevance of Marxist study of society but also to assert the irrelevance of Marxist political movement in India. He may be interpreted to be justifying the irrelevance of the Indian masses, 70 per cent of whom

are below the poverty line.

Concerning the general method of Marx, Beteille does recognize the Marxian contribution in the study of the roots of conflict in human societies. But he does not find himself very much convinced by the Marxian distinction between the 'base' and 'superstructure'.

While not denying the analytical utility of Marx's dual categories, Marxian dialectical materialism does not exclude the possibility of creation of a number of categories to cognize a particular social formation. The categories 'base' and 'superstructure' have resulted from a rigorous analysis of social processes and are not the arbitrary creations of mind simply to derive intellectual pleasure. It is simply the scientific utility of these categories which has made them an established part of Marxism.

Beteille assumes that Marxist materialistic conception of society is identical with economic determinism. Although it cannot be denied that Marx did give an important place to the forces and relations of production in the study of society we cannot presume that economic determinism is the premise of Marxian methodology. To hold so naive a view as this one would be to have a partial and single-faceted interpretation of an elaborate and multi-faceted theory of dialectical materialism.³⁶

Study of Conflict

To Beteille, socialism of Marx is a fantasy. He goes as far as to assert:

one can certainly believe that there will be a society in the future where there will be no classes and no division of labour . . . But in the cold light of sociological reasoning this kind of belief is no different from the belief in life after death: it can neither be proved nor disproved. It will be a mistake to dismiss the idea of a classless society freed from the division of labour as merely a harmless fantasy³⁷.

Logically one is led to ask: Marxism is harmful, but from whose perspective and what are the so called sociological reasons which make one look upon Marxian socialism as a fantasy?

Concerning the former question, Marxism is detrimental to the exploitative tendencies in society. But if there are some different reasons, their explication is necessary for the sake of intellectual clarity. As for the second question, Beteille alludes to the so called 'cold sociological reasoning' which makes Marxian socialism to be termed as 'fantasy.' What exactly are these mysterious 'sociological reasons'? Perhaps these are purely imaginary myths. It will be of immense interest for both Marxists and sociologists to have the logic behind such sweeping assertions.

Beteille criticizes Karl Marx for talking about societies free from conflict and antagonism as if he was talking about real societies of the future.³⁸; This attitude of treating Marx as an utopian is a view supported by none of his writings. In the words of Paul Lafargue:

it was not sentimental considerations but the study of history and

political economy that led him to communist views. He maintained that any unbiased man, free from the influence of private interests and not blinded by class prejudices, must necessarily come to the same conclusions . . . Yet while studying the economic and political development of human society without any preconceived opinion, Marx wrote with no other intention than to propagate the results of his research and with a determined will to provide a scientific basis for the socialist movement, which had so far been lost in the cloud of utopianism.⁹⁹

A real Marxist intellectual is no utopian dreamer. One is unable to grasp the mystique of logic by which Beteille draws his conclusion. It seems that he is confusing 'all conflict' with class conflict or class contradictions, with which Marx was primarily concerned. As a matter of fact, this view was in vogue even among Marxists for some time, but not for long. No Marxist today holds that all contradictions vanish with the removal of classes. "Contradictions do exist even in a socialist society—but they are not class contradictions"¹⁰⁰.

[The author has greatly benefited from discussions with S Chopra, AK Fotedar, S N Fotedar, V K Srivastava, S Nair, H Singh and a number of other scholars. Acknowledgment is made of their generous criticisms and suggestions while writing this note.]

ANIL MAHAJAN

- ¹ Andre Beteille, "Marxism and Modern Sociology", *Six Essays in Comparative Sociology* Oxford University Press, Delhi 1974. Beteille, professor of sociology at Delhi University, claims that this essay is based on lectures given from time to time to students of the university.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp 94.
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp 100.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 101.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 100.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 109-110.
- ⁸ Alvin G Gouldner "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-free Sociology" in L L Horowitz (Ed.), *The New Sociology*, Oxford University Press, New York 1964.
- ⁹ T S Simey, *Social Science and Social Purpose*, Constable, London 1968, pp 66. He is referring to a published study by Gouldner and Sprehe, "The Study of Man", *Trans-Action* May-June 1966, pp 42-44.
- ¹⁰ An attempt in this direction has recently been made by the author. See Anil Mahajan, "Towards a Formal Model of Research Techniques in Social Anthropology" in *Research Proceedings 1974* (in press), Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi 1971.
- ¹¹ Wilhelm Leibknecht, "Reminiscences of Marx" (1896), *Marx and Engels through the Eyes of Their Contemporaries*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1972, pp 58.
- ¹² For a list of works by Fei Hsio-tung and his role in Chinese social sciences of the communist period, see his biographical sketch in *Who is Who in China*, Union Research Institute, Hong Kong 1969.
- ¹³ Beteille, *op. cit.*, pp 94.
- ¹⁴ For a noteworthy review of the deliberate omission of Marxist approaches to Indian society by official sociology, see S Chopra, "Social and Anthropological Research", *Social Scientist* 22, May 1974, pp 67.

- ¹⁵ E Zaner in G Psatha (Eds.) *Phenomenal Sociology*, John Wiley and Sons, New York 1973.
- ¹⁶ Beteille, *op. cit.*, pp 96.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 98.
- ¹⁸ Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.
- ¹⁹ For an illustration, see V I Lenin, *Against Dogmatism and Sectarianism in the Working-class Movement*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965.
- ²⁰ Beteille, *op. cit.*, pp 97.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, pp 98.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Karl Marx, "India", *New York Daily Tribune (NYDT)* 3790, June 9, 1853, "Sir Charles Wood's East Indian Reforms" (*NYDT* 3801, June 22, 1853), "The British Rule in India" (*NYDT* 3804, June 25, 1853), "India" (*NYDT* 3809, July 1, 1853), "The East India Company-Its History and Results" (*NYDT* 3816, July 11, 1853), "The Indian Question-Irish Tenant Right" (*NYDT* 3816, July 11, 1853), "The Government of India" (*NYDT* 3824, July 20, 1853), "The East India Question" (*NYDT* 3828, July 25, 1853), "India" (*NYDT* 3838, August 5, 1853), "The Future Results of the British Rule in India" (*NYDT*, 3840, August 8, 1853), "Revolt in the Indian Army", (*NYDT* 5065, July 15, 1857), "The Revolt in India" (*NYDT* 5082, August 4, 1857), "The Indian Question" (*NYDT* 5091, August 14, 1857), "The Indian Revolt", (*NYDT* 5119, September 16, 1857), "Investigation of Tortures in India" (*NYDT* 5120, September 17, 1857), "British Incomes in India" (*NYDT* 5123, September 21, 1857), "The Approaching Indian Loan" (*NYDT* 5243, February 9, 1858), "The Annexation of Oudh" (*NYDT* 5336, May 28, 1858), "Lord Canning's Proclamation and Land Tenure in India" (*NYDT* 5344, June 7, 1858), "Taxes in India" (*NYDT* 5383, July 23, 1858), "The Indian Bill" (*NYDT* 5384, July 24, 1858).
Also see Friedrich Engels, "Details of the Attack on Lucknow" (*NYDT* 5333, May 25, 1858), "The British Army in India" (*NYDT* 5361, June 26, 1858).
- ²⁴ Marx discussed India in his various letters. For instance, see Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1953, pp 96, 97-99, 102-104, 381, 408, 423, 502, 528.
- ²⁵ See, for a set of essays concerning colonialism, Marx and Engels, *On Colonialism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1959.
- ²⁶ Emmanuel Terray, *Marxism and Primitive Society*. George Gurvitch has to his credit a number of write-ups where he has advocated strongly for a Marxist sociology.
- ²⁷ Wilhelm Liebknecht *op. cit.*, pp 53.
- ²⁸ Beteille himself admitted in 1969 the need to abandon idealist approaches to Indian society. See concluding remarks of Andre Beteille, "The Politics of Non-Antagonistic Strata", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (New Series), No 3, pp 29-30.
- ²⁹ Beteille *op. cit.*, pp 98-99.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 99.
- ³¹ S C Dube, *Social Sciences in Changing Society*, Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society of U P, Lucknow 1973, pp 18-19.
- ³² T S Simey, *op. cit.*, pp 130.
- ³³ Gouldner and Sprehe, *op. cit.*
- ³⁴ A Mahajan, *op. cit.*
- ³⁵ Beteille, *op. cit.*, pp 99.
- ³⁶ For a fairly adequate exposition of dialectical materialism, see J V Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.
- ³⁷ Beteille, *op. cit.*, pp 108.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 106.
- ³⁹ Paul Lafargue in *Marx and Engels through the Eyes of Their Contemporaries*, pp 23.
- ⁴⁰ J V Stalin, *Laws of Social Development*.

National Sector Undermines the Commanding Heights

GOVERNMENT has always played its part in modern economic development. As the Industrial Revolution was gaining momentum, the government in Britain was busy removing institutional and legal barriers to the capitalist path. A more direct intervention by way of imposing protective tariffs and covering gaps in industrial development has been evident among all the late-comers. In the nineteenth century the state largely drew the line along creation of the requisite institutional and infra-structural facilities.

A notable exception was Japan where the government assumed a pioneering role in the development of a broad spectrum of industries ranging from textiles to steel. More striking is the fact that the industries developed through the initiative of the state were sold out to private ownership after their viability was amply demonstrated. This is hailed as a unique feature of Japanese economic development. The Japanese model is being followed by some of its erstwhile colonies like Taiwan and South Korea. Though in its formative stages, the creation of a national sector, by throwing minority shares of public enterprises to private subscription, as propounded by T A Pai, Minister for Industrial Development, stems from the ideological moorings which inspired the Japanese model of industrialization.

The state was assigned a much bigger role in India than in Japan. A tremendous backlog in development was the legacy of the colonial period. The heritage of feudal and semi-feudal relations in land and the family-dominated monopolistic and oligopolistic industrial and commercial organizations as well as the values and behavioural patterns associated with them constituted major obstacles to economic progress. The economy was characterized by an acute shortage of capital. Private sector lacked the know-how of modern science and technology for exploiting natural resources. Hence the government had to take on comprehensive responsibilities as institution-builder, mobilizer, pioneer, promoter and regulator.

All the same, the entrepreneurial role of the state is largely restricted to those difficult tasks which were either beyond the means of

private investors or beset with uncertainties and long periods of waiting. Even this limited supplemental role has led to the dominance of the public sector controlling the commanding heights of the economy. However, the lucrative centres of profit were left in private hands.

It is true that the expanding public sector was envisaged within the overall framework of the capitalist path of development. But the adoption of planning as a method of development has necessitated the regulation and control of the market forces guiding the operations of the economy through appropriate fiscal, monetary and licensing policies. The egalitarian sentiments echoed in the Directive Principles of State Policy as well as the social and economic objectives are reflected in the industrial policy statements which were embodied in the Industries (Regulation and Control) Act. In broad terms, the private sector was to be kept out of certain important industries mentioned in Schedule I. Others whose operations were to conform to the social and economic objectives were subjected to regulation and control. The practice, however, abounds with several exceptions: in fact, concentration of economic power has increased in the organized industrial sector. The large industrial houses have secured more and more concessions, taking advantage of every crisis that confronted the Indian economy over the Plans.

Joint Sector Upside Down

Apart from indirect regulation and control of the private sector, the industrial policy announced in 1956 had envisaged government's equity participation in private companies. This was meant to serve as a lever for direct control over private investment. This aspect of the industrial policy, however, was seldom implemented. On the other hand, large industrial houses were merrily spreading their tentacles far and wide with the massive support of the governmental financial institutions like Industrial Finance Corporation, Industrial Development Bank, Life Insurance Corporation, State Industrial Financial Corporations, and Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation. The various committees of inquiry have testified about the increasing concentration in ownership of corporate property and the dominance of the large industrial houses. The Dutt Committee had suggested the establishment of the joint sector by converting the loans of the government-owned financial institutions into equity capital as a means of reducing industrial concentration. The convertibility clause was incorporated in the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act of 1969. Though the convertibility clause was seldom used, it was hanging as the Sword of Damocles against those private concerns which had a liberal access to governmental funds. The national sectors concept seeks to turn the joint sector concept upside down. Instead of converting loans to private undertakings into equity, it seeks to throw open the public sector shares for private subscription.

Every wave of crisis has meant a retreat from the egalitarian objectives publicized in the Plans and a widening of the floodgates of

concessions to large industrial houses. The deepening economic crisis since the Fourth Plan has provided a convenient pretext for defeating the very purpose of the MRTP Act. None of the monopolies has been dissolved or broken. Monopolistic and restrictive trade practices have grown unabated under the very nose of the Monopolies Commission! On the pretext of increasing production and exports, control over foreign capital is relaxed; clandestine expansion of capacity has been regularized; full capacity utilization is encouraged irrespective of the sphere of activity; licensing procedures have been liberalized; fiscal inducements increased; marginal rates of personal taxation drastically scaled down; restriction on dividend defroze while wages are put under deep-freeze and credit squeeze is relaxed in favour of production and export. Opening public sector enterprises to private participation is only a part of the policy of retreat from the egalitarian aspects of industrial policy.

People's Capitalism!

"People's capitalism" is by no means a new idea. The distribution of a microscopic proportion of ownership to workers was one of the devices adopted to blunt class consciousness and weaken the struggle against capitalist exploitation. Similar approaches were contained in the report of the Steering Group on Wages, Incomes and Prices Policies set up by T T Krishnamachari under the chairmanship of B K Madan. The report recommended reservation of a proportion of shares to be issued to "the better-off among workers and lower-salaried employees" on special terms. This was meant to "widen the avenues of garnering resources for financing the establishment or expansion of at least some public sector enterprises" while, at the same time, affording channels of investment by the middle income groups (employee population) having an anti-inflationary potential. The basic idea behind this scheme was "profit-sharing with employees as part-owners of the enterprise".³ T A Pai has extended the concept of workers' participation to that of the people in the neighbourhood of the undertakings and those interested in the end-product.⁴

There is nothing wrong in the idea of equity participation by the consumers or the people of the area where the industry is to be located. This should largely be the guideline for consumer-oriented small enterprises interested in mobilizing investible resources from different localities. As Pai has argued, "where the end-product is more cognate to people at large there should be direct participation of the people". But, to use this argument to shed part of the equity holding of the public sector undertakings and rechristen them "National Sector" is intriguing. It is true that public, private and even foreign enterprises are physically located in the country. There is also some truth that most of the influential private units thrive on governmental support and public sector resources. To call them all "national" thereby blurring the distinction between public and private sectors and under this smokescreen to dilute the ownership of public sector enterprises, cut at the very root of the earlier approach to

mixed economy in India. Pai claims that his approach is "geared on industrial priority rather than on sectoral precedence".⁵ In his words, "production in nodal industries is as important to the country as they would have been had they been in public sector".⁶ But, what are the fiscal, monetary and other instruments of regulation and control meant for if they cannot discipline the private sector to conform to national priorities? Is it necessary to dilute the ownership of public sector to achieve these priorities?

In operational terms, Pai's argument is nothing but a flimsy pretext for opening the profit-making public enterprises to private ownership and control. Which private individual will be interested in the shares of a public undertaking incurring losses even if every public sector unit is thrown open for private subscription? When an individual has the opportunity of earning 10 per cent elsewhere without bearing any risk whatsoever why should he be interested in public sector shares yielding anything less than 12 to 15 per cent as dividend? That obviously is the reason why such lucrative undertakings like Scooters India is chosen for private participation. Units like Hindustan Machine Tools are also talked about. In effect, this would mean sharing the profits of public undertakings with private subscribers just when some of the public sector units are turning the corner by way of a better operating result. Surpluses from public enterprises might as well be ploughed back in further expansion or in new avenues of investment. Why should it be frittered away by way of dividends to private shareholders who may not save and invest all the dividend income?

Camel in the Tent

It is claimed that the efficiency of working of public enterprises could be improved "through somewhat more effective functioning of accountability, in this case, to the new body of shareholders supplementing to the existing arrangements for accountability to the people through parliament"⁷. Whoever established that private sector maintains the public interest more consciously than the public sector? Obviously, this view is based on the common misunderstanding that profit is an index of efficiency or social desirability. Often it is not. Time and again it has been established how a few dominant owners commit fraud on the consuming public, government and even on the general run of shareholders. Very often, the long-term interests of the enterprise is sacrificed for short-term gains of a few individuals. How else did a large number of units in textiles, sugar, cement or engineering become so sick that the government had to go to their rescue?

No doubt, there is a lot to be desired about the instruments of legislative control and the effectiveness with which the performance of public sector is controlled. That does not mean that we have to depend on the private sector or the stock market to discipline the operations of the public sector undertakings.

If the experience of the joint sector is any guide, the national sector might as well mean the use of public funds and facilities for the advantage of a few dominant private participants. In Scooters India, the government share is restricted to 51 per cent. No restriction is in evidence on individual share-holding. It appears that under the existing law governing companies, an individual holding more than 25 per cent of the shares can wield considerable influence over the policies of the company. Sometimes he can insist on a special resolution requiring 76 per cent of the votes. Considering the degree of passivity shown by most of the government nominees on the boards of the joint sector units, private owners having minority participation can control the destiny of national sector concerns. Opening the public sector units for minority participation might as well be like letting the camel inside the tent.

Thus, the national sector concept is more far-reaching than it appears on the surface. Of course, it is symptomatic of the deepening economic crisis, where net savings fall far short of the needs of the plan. Resource mobilization may be the need of the hour. For that one may have to examine the deeper systemic aspects which constrain resource mobilization. The government can tap the incomes of the landlords. They can plug the loopholes in the tax legislation. Tax evasion, avoidance and leakages in foreign exchange could be dealt with adequately. Wasteful expenditures could be curbed. If the government cannot face these basic problems squarely, it will be a sheer illusion to expect that savings could be mopped up through the national sector. On the contrary, the penetration of private capital in public enterprises is likely to fritter away the little surpluses that have emerged in their profit and loss accounts.

M J K THAVARAJ

¹ Meena Gupta and M J K Thavaraj, "Industrial Policy and Concentration of Economic Power in India", *Social Scientist* 28, November 1974, pp 56-64.

² B K Madan, "Public Share-holding in Public Sector Corporations" *Commerce*, May 3, 1975, pp 642 and 667.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ T A Pai, "How the Public Sector Can Give Guts to the Economy", *Socialist India*, March 1, 1975, pp 29-31. Also, *Link*, Republic Issue, p 55.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 31.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ B K Madan, *op.cit.*, p 667.

COMMUNICATION

Marxism and Quantum Mechanics

THE ARTICLE by K K Theckedath in *Social Scientist* 25(August 1974) has been useful in drawing attention to the idealist interpretation especially of the Copenhagen school of quantum phenomena. The author has rightly suggested that it amounts essentially to the denial of objective reality and the knowability thereof.

In the Marxist-Leninist analysis of a scientific theory such as the quantum theory, which brought about a qualitative change in our understanding of physics and about objective reality, it is clearly insufficient to indicate the idealist distortions and to make a general affirmation of the dialectical materialist philosophical position. The Marxist stand, viewpoint and method must be applied in a detailed examination of the scientific theory from every angle, in order to separate its rational core from its idealist philosophical trappings.

From this standpoint arise two substantive criticisms of Theckedath's presentation of the question of Marxism and quantum mechanics. First, Theckedath has not clearly brought out the revolutionary core of the quantum theory, the core that forms the basis for further theoretical advances in contemporary physics. Secondly, he does not really show how the Marxist stand, viewpoint and method can be (and has been) applied to the solution of the contradictions that have arisen between the existing quantum theory and the most recent scientific data. Theckedath's presentation is characterized by a one-sided emphasis on the work of David Bohm. Prematurely, and quite unconvincingly, it elevates the tentative views of Bohm into the Marxist-Leninist standpoint on quantum mechanics.

With the quantum theory, the first revolutionary step was that of Planck and Einstein who boldly postulated that energy is transmitted in a discontinuous fashion through quanta. This was a sharp break with the established ideas of 'continuity' in classical physics and was confirmed immediately in the photo-electric effect. The second revolutionary step was the de Broglie hypothesis on the complicated form of matter. The concept of 'wave-particle duality' was a great step forward; and the various

atomic spectra, the several spectroscopic effects, the theory of absorption and emission of radiation were some of the areas where quantum mechanics was found essentially correct by experimental verification. Hence the 'wave-particle duality' must be accepted as part of the rational core of the theory. The probability interpretation of ψ marks a sharp break with the mechanistic determinism of classical physics and is a concrete expression of the statistical nature of quantum phenomena. This interpretation, though not directly verifiable, has not run counter to experimental work and data, and, in fact, has been upheld by the work on spectra. This must also be considered a part of the rational core of quantum theory.

The idealist interpretation of quantum mechanics is based on the acceptance of two main principles, the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle and the Complementarity Principle. The two cannot be considered in isolation, since, as will be shown later, in essence the latter is only a stronger and more explicit denial of objective reality than the former. The Uncertainty Principle states that a simultaneously precise specification of both position and momentum is not possible. This is expressed quantitatively as $\Delta x \cdot \Delta p > \frac{h}{4\pi}$, where Δx , Δp are the uncertainties in position x and momentum p and h is Planck's constant. In other words, the product of the uncertainties in co-ordinate and momentum is greater than or equal to $\frac{h}{4\pi}$. Two points must be clarified about the role of the uncertainty relation.

Foibles on Both Sides

First, a relation expressing the coarseness of measurement cannot be elevated into a principle denying the possibility of the existence of specific values of position and momentum. To deny the existence of such specific values for position and momentum means that we are not permitted to talk of a trajectory and this leads to a denial of objective reality. There is also the implicit statement that there do not exist precise values of position and momentum without measurement. This is an idealist position denying the existence of objectively real values of position, momentum and other quantities. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle must be understood merely as a relation expressing the coarseness of the microscope method of measurement (from a study of which the Uncertainty Principle is derived) and not as a rigid 'law of nature'. Fock, a Soviet physicist, is one of the scientists who accept this understanding of the uncertainty relation.¹

Secondly, one cannot say that the microscope method of measurement is the only possible method of measurement and hence the uncertainty holds for all time. In fact, the Soviet physicist, A A Sokolov, has pointed out a method where "the electron reveals itself without the intervention of an observer using instruments possessing microstructure to detect it."² The electron, moving with high energy in a synchrotron,

emits light quanta which in turn react with the electron itself producing a peculiar quantum 'macro-atom', which is easily detectable with great precision. Thus the electron reveals itself without any microscopic method of detection.

To understand the physical implications of the Uncertainty Principle, Bohr formulated the Complementarity Principle which states that the wave and particle aspects are mutually exclusive and only that which is being measured is capable of existence at a particular moment. In this understanding of 'wave-particle duality', the dialectical unity and conflict of opposites are not understood. The unity of the corpuscular and wave properties is objective in the fact that the laws of quantum mechanics do not change for both wave and corpuscle aspects. It is also an inherent property as seen by the fact that the discontinuous (Planck's constant) and the continuous (frequency) are connected concretely. The contradiction is objective and concrete³. Instead, in the Copenhagen Interpretation, the wave and particle aspects are understood as external to each other and unrelated in a quantum object. Hence follows the statement that only that aspect exists which is being measured at a particular moment, which leads to a denial of objective reality. Thus what is only implied by Heisenberg in his Uncertainty Principle is stated strongly and more explicitly by Bohr in his Complementarity Principle. Though Theckadath has examined generally the idealist position arising from the Uncertainty Principle and the proposed 'unanalysability' of subject and object, he has neglected the Complementarity Principle in his attack on the idealist interpretation of quantum theory. The Complementarity Principle, as much as the Uncertainty Principle, is incapable of experimental verification. It is mainly a question of the philosophical interpretation of microphenomena, as J D Bernal was quick to recognize: . . . "ideas which were consciously or unconsciously in the minds of the experimenters who made the new discoveries and opened the new fields to scientific thought."⁴

Formalism to Understanding

The lack of clarity about the exact nature of 'wave-particle duality' and the mathematical structure of the quantum theory have led to further idealist distortions. The mechanical picture of a particle being made up of the superposition of a number of waves with very close frequencies (that is, a wave packet) is very insufficient. This picture breaks down when the case of the interference of the single particle is considered. Only a single spot is formed on the screen, and this is said to be due to a 'reduction' of the wave packet, but this explanation does not say anything about what really happens. Further information about the particle in the course of reaching the screen is, according to the Copenhagen Interpretation, impossible. But having rejected the Copenhagen Interpretation, a more meaningful picture of 'wave-particle duality' must be worked out. It is possible that individually they have particle properties whereas the wave aspect is manifest in the statistical behaviour of these particles.

But as Theckedath has rightly noted, instead of working out these details there is a tendency among quantum physicists to give up physical concepts altogether and to speak merely in terms of the equations and the various operators involved in these equations. In the question of 'wave-particle duality,' this attitude is seen in the abandoning of scientific attempts to find a more meaningful physical explanation and in the mere extension of formal mathematical methods to various problems. The identical results of Heisenberg's matrix method (which, being a method of treating discontinuous assemblages, is suitable to a particle description) and Schrödinger's differential equation method (which is suited to the wave description) indicate the objective nature of 'wave-particle duality'. But not to go beyond this to the physical meaning of these equations, is to substitute formalism for the concrete study of objective reality.

Bohm's work on a causal interpretation of quantum mechanics represents an initial effort to combat the idealist interpretation of quantum mechanics and to carry forward the scientific understanding of physical phenomena. However, in no way can it be assumed that Bohm's work provides a definite, scientifically verifiable solution to the main problems of quantum mechanics.

Bohm himself considers his theory only as an attempt to move forward, to show that alternatives do exist at a deeper level to the present theory, and that the Copenhagen Interpretation's claim that it is final and absolute is untrue.⁵ Bohm's theory makes numerous assumptions about the exact nature of the sub-quantum level. The only definite statement is about the random fluctuations at that level. These assumptions, though not classifiable as unphysical, are still a long way from scientific proof and verification. It is possible that further developments may occur through the resolution of the inner contradictions of the quantum field theory without the immediate introduction of a further sub-quantum level but through the introduction of concepts like quantization of mass, space and time.

Scientific Practice under Socialism

The development of any scientific theory is only possible by its application in practice. The scientific practice of the socialist countries, especially the two largest, the Soviet Union and China, would be highly relevant to the discussion of Marxism and quantum mechanics. It is surprising that this important experience has been entirely omitted in Theckedath's analysis. A large body of scientific literature, specialized as well as popular, is available from the USSR on quantum mechanics. Scientists like Landau, Fock, Blokhintsev and philosophers like Omelianovsky have written extensively and contributed to the debate on various aspects of quantum mechanics.

The two popular Soviet books on quantum mechanics available in English which purport to provide a historical approach to the subject fail to make a clear distinction between the rational core of quantum theory

and its idealist trappings. L. Ponomarev in his book, *In Quest of the Quantum*,⁶ fails to approach the Uncertainty Principle from a critical Marxist standpoint. He accepts the Uncertainty Principle as a rigorous 'law of nature' and concurs, without the slightest inhibition, with the idealist conclusion of Heisenberg that the state does not exist independent of observation. Ponomarev omits from his popular presentation any account of the viewpoints of Soviet scientists on the interpretation and the limits of the uncertainty relation. He also accepts the Principle of Complementarity, ignoring its idealist essence which led Bohr to deny the existence of objective reality in quantum phenomena. The 'wave-particle duality' is the rational core of quantum theory but its idealist distortions arise in the Complementarity Principle, as shown earlier. This understanding is totally absent from Ponomarev's account.

V Rydник in *ABC's of Quantum Mechanics*⁷ does make certain observations on how dialectical materialism can be used as a guide to the solution of some problems of quantum mechanics, such as the interrelation of matter and field. Rydnik also points out the significance of the two main advances in quantum physics—the quantum and the de Broglie hypothesis. But he fails to apply the Marxist stand, viewpoint and method in the analysis of the Uncertainty Principle. Mentioning both the understanding of the uncertainty relation as a rigorous law of nature and the understanding of the uncertainty relation as an existing limit to the purity of observation, Rydnik attempts a compromise, asserting that the electron and the instrument are "both to blame, half and half".⁸

Reality of the Ensemble

Among Soviet scientists and philosophers in the field of quantum mechanics, three main trends have been identified. The first is represented by D I Blokhintsev. The key point of his interpretation is the representation of the wave-function Ψ as giving a statistical description of micro-particles (not statistical information of the observer as the Copenhagen Interpretation has it) in their totality, called an ensemble.⁹ He maintains that Ψ cannot be applied to a single micro-object but only to an ensemble of such micro-objects. It is the ensemble which has objective reality. Blokhintsev did not accept the Copenhagen Interpretation and the Principle of Complementarity, regarding them as the source for the denial of causality and the liquidation of objective reality. He maintained that causality is not violated in quantum mechanics, but expresses itself in the causal nature of the statistical laws of the ensemble. To him, one of the great achievements of quantum mechanics is its negation of classical determinism by the introduction of probability. In 1966, however, Blokhintsev accepted the formulation that "the wave-function is simply a routine record of the observer's information on the state of the ensemble of micro-systems."¹⁰ Although this, in his opinion, is "convenient as a formulation against which it is difficult to raise objection,"¹¹ it is unsuitable from a philosophic standpoint because of the choice of words which give

a subjective taint to the theory.

Serious objection has been raised to Blokhintsev's concept of ensembles, especially by V A Fock who found it "self-contradictory."¹² Fock pointed out that the essentials of the ensemble interpretation are (a) that the ensemble is a collection of particles which, independent of one another, are in such a state that the ensemble can be characterized by ψ , (b) hence the state of the particle should be understood as its association with an ensemble, so that (c) the wave-function does not concern an individual particle. According to Fock, in assertion (a) the state of the particle is defined by its wave-function but this stands in conflict with assertion (c). Again, by assertion (a) the ensemble is defined by the wave-function whereas by assertion (b) the wave-function is defined through the ensemble. This is a vicious circle.

V A Fock himself was representative of another major trend. His interpretation is presented in his article, "On the Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics", written in 1958.¹³ Fock asserted that quantum mechanics does give a fully objective account of microscopic reality. He blamed Bohr's inexact use of terminology for much of the confusion created. One such example, he identified in the contention of the Copenhagen Interpretation that the Principle of Complementarity contradicted the Principle of Causality. According to the Copenhagen Interpretation, since the individual properties of a body exist only at the time of measurement there can be no causality at the quantum level. Fock insisted that this problem could be removed by a redefinition of causality. Along with Blokhintsev, he maintained that causality had been preserved in the behaviour of statistical ensembles. However, he differed from Blokhintsev in that he maintained that the wave-function ψ referred to a single micro-object.

Physical State and Measuring Devices

The essential point where the quantum system differs from the classical system, according to Fock, is that the physical state of the quantum system depends explicitly on measuring devices. He considered that this dependence on an instrumental device was in no way a denial of objective reality "because all the properties of a micro-object, including the specifically quantum ones (those which classical mechanics cannot describe) are disclosed through the influence of a micro-object on a classically describable measuring instrument."¹⁴ This view of the physical state not being independent of measuring devices has not been generally accepted by Soviet physicists. Omelianovsky, for instance, has pointed out that the physical state is non-relative to measuring instruments. To deny this would be to assert that the physical state is determined by the instrument, which would be denying objective reality.¹⁵

Omelianovsky's position represents the third trend. It is more or less identical with Fock's except that Omelianovsky rejects Fock's interpretation of the state being dependent on the instrument, as we discussed

above. Although Omelianovsky in 1956 opposed the Principle of Complementarity as a mechanistic understanding of 'duality', in 1963 at the thirteenth World Philosophical Congress he accepted it as a dialectical statement of 'wave-particle duality' with some reservations on the way in which it was applied.¹⁶

We may note the points of agreement among the three major trends: (1) They agree that causality can be retained in quantum theory, and (2) they reject Bohm's approach as an attempt to return to classical concepts and classical determinism. In fact, Blokhintsev compares Bohm's attempt to "seeking unwettable gunpowder."¹⁷

There are other views among Soviet scientists. A A Tiapkin has suggested¹⁸ that an approach could be made in terms of creating a newer and more complete theory, which, while not differing from the present theory in its predictions, would provide a more complete description of physical phenomena and deal especially with the gaps left by the Complementarity Principle between the moments of measurement. As a beginning, he has pointed out that even existing work by Feynman has shown that it is possible to specify the trajectory of a quantum object.¹⁹

Chinese material on this subject is not easily accessible, because of the censorship imposed by the Government of India and our libraries on this material. But discussions in *Red Flag*²⁰ indicate that Chinese physicists and philosophers are doing serious work on these problems.

Towards New Physics

The further development of quantum physics, and the solution of its fundamental problems, is possible only by a comprehensive scientific investigation of all available facts and theories on the firm foundation of dialectical materialist philosophy. The scientist will be led astray in his field if idealist philosophy is allowed to intrude and distort scientific truth. Though science is instinctively materialist, idealist bourgeois philosophy tends to take cover behind scientific development. Those physicists who are not firmly grounded in dialectical materialist philosophy are led into what Lenin called "physical idealism",²¹ idealism in the field of physics.

This invariably leads to a crisis in physics. The essence of the crisis, in Lenin's words, "consists in the breakdown of the old laws and basic principles, in the rejection of an objective reality existing outside the mind, i.e. in the replacement of materialism by idealism and agnosticism."²² The contention of the Copenhagen physicists that objective reality had disappeared reveals only their ignorance of dialectics; their ignorance that science, as it advances, does not disprove objective reality, but discovers new forms and deepens our knowledge of objective reality. Lenin noted that

one school of natural scientists in one branch of natural science has slid into a reactionary philosophy, being unable to rise directly and at once from metaphysical materialism to dialectical materialism. This step is being made, and will be made, by modern physics; but

it is advancing towards the only true method and the only true philosophy of natural science, not directly, but by zigzags, not consciously, but instinctively, not clearly perceiving its 'final goal,' but drawing closer to it gropingly, unsteadily, and sometimes even with its back turned to it. Modern physics is in travail; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism. The process of child-birth is painful. And in addition to a living healthy being, there are bound to be produced certain dead products, refuse fit only for the garbage heap. And physical idealism...must be regarded as such refuse.^{2,4}

This, the Marxist-Leninist presentation of the question of true scientific method and philosophy, applies as much to the 'new physics' of today, as it did to the 'new physics' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

T JAYARAMAN

- ¹ Loren R Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union*, Allen Lane, 1973, Ch III, p 99.
- ² A A Sokolov in *Philosophical Problems of Elementary-Particle Physics*, Progress Publishers Moscow 1968, p 263.
- ³ See E I Bitsakis, "Symmetry and Contradiction", *Science and Society*, Fall 1974, Vol 38 No 3, pp 326-346.
- ⁴ J D Bernal, *Science in History*, Watts & Co, London 1954, p 532.
- ⁵ D Bohm, *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957, p 75.
- ⁶ L Ponomarev, *In Quest of the Quantum*, MIR Publishers, Moscow 1973.
- ⁷ V Rydnyk, *ABC's of Quantum Mechanics*, MIR Publishers, Moscow 1958.
- ⁸ V Rydnyk, *op. cit.*, p 114.
- ⁹ D Blokhintsev cited in Graham, *op. cit.*, p 84.
- ¹⁰ D Blokhintsev cited in Graham, *op. cit.*, p 92.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² V A Fock cited in Graham, *op. cit.*, p 87.
- ¹³ V A Fock, cited in Patrick A Heelan, "Quantum Mechanics", *Marxism, Communism, and Western Society*, Vol 7, Herder & Herder, 1973, p 131.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Omelianovsky, cited in Patrick A Heelan, *op. cit.*, p 131.
- ¹⁶ Omelianovsky, cited in Graham, *op. cit.*, p 106.
- ¹⁷ D Blokhintsev, cited in Graham, *op. cit.*, p 93.
- ¹⁸ A A Tiapkin in *Philosophical Problems of Quantum Mechanics*, Moscow 1970, cited in Loren Graham, *op. cit.*, p 108-109.
- ¹⁹ A A Tiapkin in *Philosophical Problems of Elementary-Particle Physics*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1968, p 338.
- ²⁰ "Natural Science and Dialectical Materialism: Looking at the Bankruptcy of Idealism and Metaphysics from the Development of Modern Physics", *Hong Qi* No 9, 1965, p 31.
- ²¹ V I Lenin, "Empirio-Criticism", *Collected Works*, Vol 14, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1968, p 314,
- ²² *Ibid.*, p 258,
- ²³ *Ibid.*, pp 312-313.

BOOK REVIEW

SHRIRAM MAHESHWARI, *INDIAN ADMINISTRATION*, Orient Longman Ltd., Bombay, pp 448, Hardbound Rs 40. Paperback Rs 16.

A DOCUMENT under the title, "Basic Economic Issues", submitted to the All-India Congress Committee in 1973 pointed out that "the present bureaucracy under the orthodox and conservative leadership of the Indian Civil Service with its upper-class prejudices can hardly be expected to meet the requirements of social and economic change along socialist lines." That was a reflection of the true character of the Indian administration. Since independence, the Congress has been continuously in power at the centre for nearly twenty-eight years. To show its earnestness for administrative reforms, it has been frequently seeking the advice of veteran bureaucrats like Gorwala and Bajpai. In between, a globe-trotting American expert was also available. Finally in 1966 an Administrative Reforms Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Shri Morarji Desai, whose conservative outlook was well known. And the personnel of the Commission revealed the traditional bureaucratic bias. Later change in the chairmanship did not make any difference in the class character of the Commission: It laboured for four years and produced twenty reports, besides those of the study teams and working groups appointed by it. Now, there is a permanent department of administrative reforms functioning in the Cabinet Secretariat. The net result even today, to those who have no access to the corridors of power, is that the government continues to remain "a vast circumlocution office, full of trite barnacle practising the dedicated art of seeing that nothing ever got done", to quote the immortal Pickwick of Charles Dickens. Maheshwari, a prolific writer on the subject, has produced a useful survey of public administration in India since independence. It discusses administrative procedures and working of government at the central, state and local levels. It also covers the Planning Commission, advisory committees, zonal councils, public sector undertakings and centre-state relations.

India has a written constitution, the product of the liberal tradition of the West. It has adopted the parliamentary system of government. The parliamentary system works at two levels, at the centre and in the states. According to Maheshwari, the Indian system fulfils the four usual tests for qualifying as a federation, though no specific mention has been made about it in the constitution. Really, arrangements are deliberately made for the centre to keep the states in a leash.

First, the responsibilities for the maintenance of law and order and for economic and social development have been vested with the states. But they have been deprived of the main sources of revenue for the purpose. They have been placed at the mercy of the Finance Commission, appointed every five years by the centre, to fill the gaps in their revenue. And the Planning Commission keeps a tight control over the allocation of resources to various projects.

Secondly, a peculiar feature of the Indian administration is that the central government recruits and trains administrative personnel for key posts in the states and lays down their conditions of service. The requirements of the centre for manning key posts are met on tenure basis from those allotted to the states. The practice of interchange of administrative personnel between the states and the centre is inherited from the colonial days. The Lee Commission on superior services had noticed its incompatibility after the transfer of executive responsibility for certain subjects to the elected representatives of the state assemblies under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. After independence, as the Congress government preferred a peaceful transition it decided to avail of the services of members of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) left behind by the British with all the privileges enjoyed by them and also to form an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) to dovetail it with the former.

Higher Civil Service

Initially, the Government of India constituted two all-India services, namely the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS). Personnel for these services are recruited by the Union Public Service Commission after a written test and interview. Later they are given intensive training. After a spell of service, some of them are sent for training in special fields to Commonwealth countries and to the USA under the aid programmes. Numbering about 4000, they form the core of the administration. They are supposed to remain politically neutral, impartial and anonymous. And they are made to feel that they belong to a superior service. Such a complex and the lack of leadership alienate them from the mainstream of life. It percolates down to services at all levels making it difficult to create in people a real sense of their rights and obligations and to get them involved in the developmental activities of the government.

The third characteristic of the Indian administration, an inhibition of the colonial days is that man by nature is dishonest. To counteract it,

undue stress is laid on procedure. Even a serious mistake will be condoned as an error of judgment, if the rules are followed meticulously. On the other hand, a good performance will be viewed with suspicion, if rules are violated. From Curzon to Indira Gandhi, all heads of government have complained about the inordinate procedural delays. Really, in a parliamentary type of democracy, procedures are the protective armour of the bureaucrat. It may be irritating and confusing and also the main source of political and administrative corruption. It is ingrained in the system.

Basically, the structure and style of functioning of the Indian bureaucracy continue to be those in the colonial days, just as the economic base and the production relations. The vital relationship between the economic base and the superstructure is missing in Maheshwari's survey. That would have given a new perspective to the conflicts afflicting the country. The real issue, now, is which path the ruling party will follow to keep itself in power, after its repeated failures to cut off completely from the colonial past and to make "radical economic and social changes on socialist lines".

RAMA VARMA

Telegram : 'PLANTCORP'

Phones-8301 & 8302
(9 connections)

THE PLANTATION CORPORATION OF KERALA LTD

(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)

Post Box No. 12 Kottayam-4 Kerala

AREA OF PLANTATIONS

Rubber		Oil Palm at Anchal	
Kodumon	2730 Hectares	Proposed	3000 Hectares
Kalady	3401 "	Planted	550 "
Perambra	685 "		
Thannithode	200 "		

Factories at: Kodumon, Vettilappara, Perambra.

Producers of all grades of high quality sheets, crepe rubber, 60% concentrated latex & crumb rubber.

Warehousing is another name for Scientific Storage

The Kerala State Warehousing Corporation through its 47 well-equipped warehouses helps solving storage problems in the State in our own humble way. WE ALSO DO

- arrange shipping clearance, railway clearance, transportation, storage and distribution of foodgrains, CARE cargo, fertilizers etc. etc.,
- carry out disinfestation of stock in the warehouses and also at party's own premises at very moderate rates.
- conduct soil fumigation in the nurseries and gardens

Prosperity through planned progress. Our country is striving hard at it. Obviously, that is our aim too.

KERALA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION

P. B. No, 1727, Cochin - 682016.

Gram : KERWACOR.

Tel. Phone Office: 31537
35069

**KERALA STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION LIMITED**

(A Government of Kerala Undertaking)

**Offers promotional and financial assistance to entrepreneurs
in setting up large - and medium - scale industries in Kerala.**

We have so far promoted 10 projects, rendered financial assistance to 31 companies to establish new units and to 13 others for effecting substantial expansion, diversification etc.

Special incentives offered to industries in the notified backward districts of the State.

To know how we can help you in setting up large - and medium - scale units in Kerala.

Please write to:-

**KERALA STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION LIMITED,
'PURUSHOTHAM',
SASTHAMANGALAM,
POST BOX No. 105,
TRIVANDRUM-695010**

**KAIC SPEARHEADS
GREEN REVOLUTION**

The farm mechanisation launched by KAIC ushers in a new revolution.

The world famous Power Tiller KUBOTA produced by the Kerala Agro Machinery Corporation, Athani, our subsidiary concern promotes this revolution.

KUBOTA Power Tiller is NOW available on hire purchase terms.

Please contact

**THE KERALA AGRO INDUSTRIES
CORPORATION LIMITED**

Kissan Jyothi, TRIVANDRUM-23.



VAIDYARATNAM P.S. VARIER'S
ARYA VAIDYA SALA

Pioneers in Ayurveda

KOTTAKKAL.

(Kerala State) Estd. 1902.

Phones : Head Office 31, Nursing Home 44, Chief Physician 25, Managing Trustee 61 (Office) 27 (Residence)

Branches at :

Madras (Phone: 666226), Kozhikode (72155), Palghat (3104), Erode (3172), Tirur (231), Ernakulam (33026), Alwaye (549) and Trivandrum (62349) and over 150 authorized Agencies and Depots.

Genuine standard Ayurvedic medicines and expert medical advice are available at the Head Office at Kottakkal and all Branches, Depots and Agencies. Medical advice through correspondence is given by the Chief Physician at Kottakkal.

Special treatments like Pizhichil, Navarakkizhi etc., are conducted under the supervision of the Chief Physician at the Golden Jubilee Nursing Home, Kottakkal. Please reserve your rooms in advance and come only after getting confirmation.

Persons desiring to consult the Chief Physician are requested to come only after fixing an appointment in advance.

MANAGING TRUSTEE

Social Scientist

AUGUST NUMBER

In just a couple of months, this journal completes its third year of publication. To mark it, we are making the August issue a rather special one, dealing with the theme:

NATIONAL QUESTION IN INDIA

Analysts who have made a close study of the problem in different parts of the country will contribute to the discussion.

Subscribers who have paid up to August and later will get their copy by post. Over the counter, you can get it at our single copy price of Rs 3. No extra charge. If however you want it by registered post, send us Rs 4.50 to cover postal expenses.

Agents who want more copies (in excess of their normal consignment) of the special thematic number should send in their requirements by 20 July 1975.

That is also the last date for advertisers who can reach out to a wider audience in a special number.

Business Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1
Kerala

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 NOVEMBER 1974
World capitalist crisis: *B T Ranadive*; Three misconceptions about the state: *Arvind N Das*; Attitudes to political parties: *Sheo Nath Singh*; Notes on: Indian industrial policy and economic power concentration; Signposts to new education.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 5 DECEMBER 1974
Inflation, stagnation and an alternative approach to planning: *Suhas Chattopadhyay*; Early South Indian society and economy - The Tinai concept: *K Sivathamby*; Report on economic crisis and the fifth five year plan; Notes on: Theory of convergence; Secondary school teachers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6/7 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1975. Current crisis, planning and growth: *Ashok Mitra*; Current inflation in India: *Prabhat Patnaik*; Fiscal policies and inflation: *M J K Thavaraj*; Distributional effects of inflation: *R Radhakrishna* and *Atul Sarma*; State intervention and foodgrain prices: *N Krishnaji*; A world without inflation: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Notes on: Development studies in Sri Lanka; Parliamentary process.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 8 MARCH 1975
Sociology and sociological radicalism: *S C Varma*; Colonialization of the Indian economy, 1757-1900: *Irfan Habib*; Class character of the Indian Constitution: *Hari Chand*; Theories of state, Aristotle to Marx: *Arvind N Das*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 9 APRIL 1975
Samuelson's Marx-kritik: *J E King*; Problems of Indian history: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Origin and development of Islam: *Asghar Ali Engineer*; Student leadership in Lucknow: *Rashid Ali Syed*; Notes on: Mathematical methods in international relations analysis; Property rights under the Constitution.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10 MAY 1975
Politics of psychoanalysis: *S C Varma*; Political economy of food: *Kumares Chakravarty*; Herostone worship in ancient south India: *N Vanamamalai*; Student movement at J N U: *Prakash Karat*; Note on transnational monopolies.

Social Scientist

JULY

1975

36

China and the Undivided Communist Party
of India □ Sociology of Conflict Theory
Revolutionary Violence in a People's War
□ Foreign Monopolies Dominate Indian Industry
□ Marx, Samuelson and Keynes

Social Scientist

Editor
Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor
Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation
SOCIAL SCIENTIST
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11
Air Mail : Annual \$ 17

(In Pound Sterling)

Sea Mail : Annual £ 4.50
Air Mail : Annual £ 6.00

Single Copy Rs 3

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 3 JULY
NUMBER 12 1975

CONTENTS

Georges Kristoffel Lieten	3	China and the Undivided Communist Party of India
Manorama Savar	29	Sociology of Conflict Theory
Malcolm Caldwell	43	Revolutionary Violence in a People's War
		• NOTE
Meena Gupta	53	Foreign Monopolies Dominate Indian Drug Industry
		COMMUNICATION
Suhas Chattopadhyay	61	Marx, Samuelson and King
		BOOK REVIEW
Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri	71	Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal
	77	Index to <i>Social Scientist</i> 25 to 36

Articles, note, communication and book review express the views of their authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr MALCOLM CALDWELL who teaches history at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, is editor of the JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ASIA.

SUHAS CHATTOPADHYAY is in the Economic Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta.

MEENA GUPTA teaches economics at Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi.

GEORGES KRISTOFFEL LIETEN is a research scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Dr MANORAMA SAVUR teaches sociology at the University of Bombay.

Dr BINAY BHUSHAN CHAUDHURI teaches history at Calcutta University.

GEORGES KRISTOFFEL LIETEN

*China and the Undivided Communist Party
of India*

LENIN showed how opportunism was not a chance occurrence but the social product of an entire period of history, and how the policy of imperialism caused the international workers' movement to split into two sections, the revolutionary and the opportunist, the latter being fed on and appeased by the crumbs of the spoils which imperialists squeezed out of the colonies.¹ In the fourth "Comment on the Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU" in October 1963 the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) stated that the same kind of division in the international working-class movement as that described by Lenin was taking shape also in socialist countries where the proletariat wields state power.² The deputy head of the propaganda department of the CCP had earlier stated that the "opportunist revisionism" of the Soviet leaders was unprecedentedly harmful since it appeared in a great socialist country which had very attractive means at its disposal of leading the people astray.³

Thus, according to the CCP, a socialist state can have a revisionist and, one may assume, also a left adventurist deviation, reflecting the opportunist reaction of the leadership to a whole range of influences. One of the major sources of opportunism in the foreign policy of a socialist country is the existence of imperialism which continues to be a fighting though decaying force on the world scene. In resisting imperialism and

uniting with anti-imperialist or non-aligned countries or forces, socialist countries are bound to go in for a series of compromises while trying to "unite the many and defeat the few". These compromises, fully justifiable in the Leninist practice of combination of forces and peaceful coexistence of different social systems now give rise to what may be described as "economic opportunism", a deviation from the theoretically correct path of proletarian internationalism.

Economic opportunism is of two kinds. On the one hand there is economic support, and trade combined with friendly relations, and even unqualified international support to nations which do not stand as symbols of anti-imperialist or democratic traditions, as Pakistan (for China) and Bangladesh (for Russia). On the other hand trade practices common to imperialism are adopted which have led a number of anti-Russian writers to the conclusion that, for example in relation to India, Russia not only behaves as, but really is, a social-imperialist country. These writers obviously forget that imperialism is finance capital, parasitic and militaristic. What Russia usually does is to buy from and to sell to the Third World at the prevailing market prices, which is but normal as long as imperialism is a major force in the market mechanism.⁴ However, there are exceptions which smack of imperialist trade practices, as shown very forcefully by Fidel Castro some years ago⁵. Similar practices pay dividends, and for most Marxist-Leninists it is usually no surprise that they are followed by the revisionist communist leadership in power: the benefits accruing from a favourable state-to-state relationship will even induce the communist party of a socialist state to influence the tactics and strategy of the communist party in the capitalist country concerned.

Lapses of Foreign Policy

The problem, however, is to explain what is commonly described as right opportunism in foreign policy when no revisionist leadership is supposed to be in power, as demonstrated in CCP's relations with India till 1959. Also how can one explain the combination of left opportunism with right opportunism evident, for example, in the attitude of the CCP to Pakistan roughly from 1966 till at least 1973. Different explanations have been given ranging from "great power chauvinism" and "adventurism fortified by petty-bourgeois chauvinism" to "administrative mistakes, not in principle" and "left adventurist deviation". It is not the purpose of this article to look for all internal and external causes which are responsible for the sudden and radical changes of the international understanding of the CCP. Before that attempt can be made, the most comprehensive collection of data and documents has to be undertaken, and since that stage has not yet been reached one has to satisfy oneself with analyzing the attitude of China towards the Indian communist movement, and vice versa. Neither shall I try to specifically define the concepts and assume that they be understood as they are used in Marxist language. For the broad framework, however, the hypothesis is evolved.

The fight against right-wing deviations often leads to left-wing deviations, and opportunist deviations are more likely to persist in the foreign policy which is usually not under the same extent of criticism and control of the masses as domestic policy is, especially during a Cultural Revolution. Hence, even alongside a Marxist-Leninist domestic policy, mistakes and even objectively counter-revolutionary policies may appear in the foreign policy as long as imperialism lasts.

For all practical purposes we shall overlook the rather complicated relations of the CCP with the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Indian government in the early years of independence. A brief reference must be made to the *Hindi Chini bhai bhai* (Indians and Chinese are brothers) period. Ever since the 1953 Madurai congress of the CPI, a majority of the Indian communists supported Nehru's peace policy reinforced by the China-India agreement of 29 April 1954 (on the status of Tibet) enunciating for the first time the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Visits of Chou En-lai to India and of Nehru to China were followed by the enthusiastic support of the Third World for the *Panch Sheela* at Bandung. This policy got the whole-hearted support of the CPI, the CPSU and the CCP.

Points of Difference

Differences arose among the three parties on three questions: destalinization, peaceful transition and character of the Indian state. On destalinization, the Central Committee of the CPI defended Stalin against Khrushchev's attack: "Stalin rendered great service to the world communist movement and in the development of the communist parties. Comrade Stalin was a great friend of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and his work immensely helped them in their struggle for national liberation."⁶ Talking to the fourth congress of the CPI at Palghat in April 1956, general secretary Ajoy Ghosh declared that the editorial in the Chinese newspaper *Jenmin Jibao* of 5 April, "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" was the most comprehensive and most satisfying document on this subject, and in a resolution of the Central Committee in July the CPI almost verbally repeated the Chinese position against the "one-sided appraisal" of the CPSU: "It is evident that a system in which such violations and distortions (as alleged) were inherent could not have unleashed the creative energies of hundreds of millions on a scale never known before and brought about such unprecedented transformations."⁷

In the debate on transition to socialism also the CPI line was closer to the CCP than to the CPSU. In an article in *New Times* in July 1956, academician Modeste Rubinstein had contended that the objective conditions for a non-capitalist path in India existed, and that, as a matter of fact, Nehru was advocating such a path.⁸ On the political plane the same theory was expounded by Anastas Mikoyan in his address to the eighth congress of the CCP in September of the same year: in view of the

development of state capitalism, India, Burma, Indonesia and Egypt were suggested to be able to pass over to socialism peacefully⁹. The Indian communists at their Palghat congress, just before the Rubinstein thesis was published, had rejected the call for an alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the fight against imperialist and feudal elements though in the pre-congress intra-party discussions and at the congress itself a minority group around P C Joshi and Rajeshwar Rao had advocated this alternative. After the publication of Rubinstein's article, general secretary Ajoy Ghosh took up the argument in the *New Age*. Agreeing that there was a non-capitalist path he added that it was an illusion to think that the Indian government, led by the bourgeoisie, would follow that path and held that only when the state power was in the hands of the working class could state capitalism lead to socialism as had been borne out by the Chinese example.¹⁰ Apart from translating the articles by Ghosh and Rubinstein the CCP did not take part in the discussion, but from the theoretical articles published in Chinese magazines during the previous three years it was clear that the party stood on the side of the Indian general secretary. This position was restated by Liu Shao-chi in his political report to the eighth party congress and in an article, "Again on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", in *Jenmin Jibao* at the end of the year, against

persons who, under the pretext of opposition to dogmatism, revise their Marxism-Leninism, end up by failing to see a distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (and think that) some countries with a bourgeois government are able to establish socialism without going through the proletarian revolution.¹¹

Monopoly-Landlord Alliance

On the character of the Indian ruling classes the lines were drawn differently. Was the national bourgeoisie in state power or the monopoly bourgeoisie? To the Russians the whole bourgeoisie was in power as the national bourgeoisie.¹² The official line of the CPI was less outspoken about the anti-imperialist character of the bourgeoisie as a whole, but nevertheless the party held that the whole bourgeoisie was in state power: "The contradiction between imperialism and the bourgeoisie as a whole remained."¹³ E M S Namboodiripad explained that there was a conflict between two sections within the bourgeoisie¹⁴, but he did not spell out which section was dominating the state power. This was but natural since the CPI organization was divided on this issue, and, in the spirit of democratic centralism, no individual theories were supposed to be spread from public platforms. After the split within the Indian communist movement, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) made its position on the Nehru government clear:

The entire record of its programme, policies, activities and the role of the Indian National Congress prove beyond any doubt that its

leadership represented, in the main, the class interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie... We cannot subscribe to the view that the Congress government, at any stage of its existence during the last twenty years, represented the interests of the middle and non-big bourgeoisie ... as against and in demarcation to the Indian big business which is compromising and collaborating with the imperialists and allying with big landlordism.¹⁵

Up to 1959 the CCP had an understanding of the class nature of Jawaharlal Nehru's government, which was close to that of the CPSU and it was not until after the incidents in Tibet that they started having second thoughts about it. In the Central Committee's political report to the first session of the eighth national congress in 1956, Liu Shao-chi declared that "there are a number of countries in Asia and Africa which have shaken off the colonial bondage and achieved international independence. These nationally independent countries, our great neighbour India included ... are all pursuing a peaceful, neutral foreign policy."¹⁶ To the 1958 session of the People's Congress, Chou-En-lai in his report on the international situation spoke about "our great neighbour which is always concerned for world peace and international security", and about "Jawaharlal Nehru with his basic idea of expanding the area of peace", which was the same as "what the Chinese people have always proposed".¹⁷

Second Thoughts in Peking

After the incidents in Tibet on 10 March 1959 Jawaharlal Nehru initially took a cautious position, considering Tibet as an internal affair of China. The Chinese press reciprocated by proclaiming its hope on Nehru's loyalty to the Panch Sheela, while at the same time accusing subversive elements in the Indian Kalimpong for having masterminded the revolt.¹⁸ Nehru, however, slowly moved over to the position of his right-wing opposition, particularly in his address to parliament on 27 April 1959. This speech was reprinted in the Chinese newspapers with the editorial comment: "This is a vital matter for the Chinese people. We are bound to pay great attention to this matter." This call was accompanied by a theoretical article, "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy", in which the global role of Nehru was still assessed positively: "There are sections of the bourgeoisie in some capitalist countries, whose political attitude in general is different from that of the above-mentioned people (Rhee, Diem, etc.), but who line up with imperialism on this question. Certain bourgeois elements in India are such an example." The article continued that in class terms the Indian government represented two aspects of the picture:

The Indian bourgeoisie maintains innumerable links with imperialism and is to a certain extent dependent on foreign capital. Moreover, by its class nature the big bourgeoisie has a certain urge for outward expansion . . . In international affairs, the Indian government headed by Prime Minister Nehru has been reflecting generally the will of the

Indian people and playing an important and praiseworthy role in opposing war and colonialism and safeguarding peace.¹⁹

Nehru was now in danger of being reclassified as a representative of the reactionary monopoly and compradore bourgeoisie, which was trying to build up an anti-Chinese campaign as a pretext to suppress the democratic forces at home. According to the Chinese, however, the shift was not irreversible: "In our relations with certain Asian nationalist countries, there once appeared small patches of dark cloud, but the sun cannot be overshadowed for long."²⁰

Meanwhile the CPI gave full support to the stand of the People's Government of China which was "leading the people of Tibet from medieval darkness to prosperity and equality," and called upon Nehru who had "taken a proper attitude on this question and refused to oblige the reactionaries" to investigate the affairs in Kalimpong which the Government of China had accused of being the command centre of the rebels.²¹ However, though supporting the Chinese government in its fight against a reactionary feudal clan in a region under its authority, the CPI after the middle of April dropped all reference to the Indian role in Kalimpong after the same had been done by Moscow.²²

Pros and Antis Line up

The border conflict from the end of August onwards brought into the open the split in the international communist movement and the place of the CPI in it. On 9 September, while Ajoy Ghosh was in Moscow, the Chinese government was notified by the Soviet embassy that TASS would issue a statement the next day on the border question. According to Chinese sources, Moscow was asked to refrain from it and was given a letter from Chou to Nehru for consideration. The same evening the statement was issued merely expressing regret over the clashes, taking a neutral stand between China and India and thus indirectly supporting India.²³ Several statements were made by Khrushchev to the effect that China was mainly responsible for the clashes and should withdraw from the territory.²⁴ In late September 1959 the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the CPI nevertheless passed a resolution, stating that it was "confident that socialist China can never commit aggression against India..."²⁵ However, after the October clashes in Ladakh, the National Council meeting at Meerut, despite a vigorous fight by the leftist minority, passed a resolution which had come much closer to the position of the Indian government, recognizing the validity of the McMahon line in north-eastern India. "Grief" was expressed over the Ladakh incident, but at the same time it was maintained that a war psychosis was being whipped up by reactionary and imperialist forces in India with the aim of disrupting the democratic movement, diverting attention from the internal problems and attacking the Communist Party. The Meerut resolution reiterated that a socialist China could never have any warlike designs on India, in the same way as a free India could never have any intention of

aggression against China.²⁶

With the emergence of the debate between Russia and China a "pro-Chinese" and an "anti-Chinese" wing emerged within the CPI, though this polarization was not purely on ideological lines. Gradually, therefore, the CEC stand on the border issue moved closer to the position of the CPSU, and at its meeting in September 1960 the CEC attacked China for making a mistaken analysis of the Indian situation in a dispute between two countries of the peace camp²⁷. Ajoy made the same point at the meeting of the 81 Communist and Workers Parties in Moscow in November 1960. After stating that India played a major role in the most important struggle for peace, he continued: "Imperialists are trying to disrupt the peace zone. The socialist states must do everything in their power to prevent this. In our opinion the CCP has very recently underestimated the importance of this task and, in relation to India, has not acted in a way so as to strengthen the peace zone."²⁸

In a full-length version of his speech which was later published by the CPI it appeared more clearly that the border issue was not judged on its merits, but was part and parcel of the strategic understanding of the new epoch. For Ghosh the most important point was not the validity of the claims made by the two governments but the attitude a socialist government should adopt towards a country which was the most important non-socialist state of the peace zone:

We feel therefore that in dealing with this question of borders due weight should have been given by our Chinese comrades to the larger interests of the socialist camp as a whole and of the unity of the peace zone . . . We maintain that this question should not be looked at as one of the border claims based on history, about which endless argument over facts may be raised, but we should approach it keeping in view the paramount need to strengthen and consolidate the peace zone and to strengthen the democratic forces in India.²⁹

Ideological Rift

According to the CPSU and part of the leadership of the undivided CPI, Nehru and other progressive Congressmen belonged to that democratic front and the CCP was repeatedly being accused of not doing anything to prevent the reactionary offensive, which was anticipated as a sequel to the border conflict.³⁰ Thus, in a matter of some months the majority in the CPI moved to a position of condemning the reactionaries in India of instigating a war hysteria against a socialist China which could never commit aggression, to a position where China was held responsible for the border clashes and the reactionary offensive in India. This shift coincided with the ideological debate in which the majority of the CPI faithfully and without reservations went over to the Russian side. The struggle for the correct Marxist-Leninist line in the international communist world had started and the Sino-Indian border dispute became henceforth assessed in the light of the political line, which continued to be the

major point of debate.

This debate started immediately after the twentieth congress of the CPSU, where the secret revelations about Stalin were made and the peaceful transition line was laid down. At this congress the totally new line with major implications for the world communist movement was propounded without even prior information to, let alone consultation with, the other communist parties. At the 1957 meeting of the 12 socialist countries in Moscow, Mao Tse-tung in the name of his delegation opposed the Russian draft resolution twice and presented a revised draft which pointed to the possibility of a non-peaceful road.³¹ Subsequently the eighth congress of the CCP reiterated the stand that revisionism was popping up its head: "The existence of bourgeois influence is the internal source of revisionism, while surrender to imperialist pressure is its external source."³² However, until 1959 it was not clear that a bitter ideological fight was on between China and Russia. In June of that year the Soviet Union unilaterally tore up the agreement on new technology for the Chinese defence system which had been concluded earlier, and in July of the next year all 10000 Soviet experts in China were recalled within one month, thereby cancelling hundreds of projects and dealing a severe blow to the Chinese development efforts. According to the Russians both actions were taken because the Chinese did not offer sufficiently adequate working conditions, misused the technology and overworked the machinery. According to Chinese sources this was a clear case of economic blackmailing and was repeated in 1963 when the Russians proposed to restart their economic support, conditional on the Chinese agreement to the Russian ideological position.³³

Battle against Revisionism

Meanwhile at meetings of the communist parties in Bucharest and Moscow in 1960 the ideological fight broke out from public platforms, with the CPSU attacking Albania and welcoming the previously excluded revisionist Yugoslavia into the socialist fold, and with the CCP, while rejecting certain theses in the draft resolution of the 81 parties, stating that the differences were only of a partial character: "We hold that the main point in the relations between our two parties is their unity in the struggle for the common cause; this is so because both our countries are socialist countries and both our parties are built on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and are fighting to advance the cause of the whole socialist camp."³⁴

By then, however, the ideological rupture between the CCP and the overwhelming majority of the other communist parties was an established fact. In order to retrieve as much ground as possible in the battle against revisionism the CCP published in April 1960 the famous theoretical article "Long Live Leninism", which was reprinted by B T Ranadive in the June issue of *New Age* monthly.

The split in the international communist movement was dated by

the Chinese as 9 September 1959 when TASS issued the statement on Tibet which the CCP considered as a stab in the back, as "the first instance in history in which a socialist country, instead of condemning the armed provocations of the reactionaries of a capitalist country, condemned another fraternal socialist society."⁵ This date has become important because the incident established a landmark in the fight for the ideological hegemony between the respective parties. The CCP had been fighting against revisionism for three years and logically had to fight the Soviet stand on India, for in the Chinese view this stand resulted directly from the conclusions of the twentieth congress. The pertinent question, however, is not why China and Russia took publicly two different positions, but whether a different analysis of the character of the Indian state led to a non-cooperative position vis a vis the Nehru government or whether on the other hand an unfriendly act of India on the Tibet issue led the Chinese to steer an anti-Indian course and adopt their views on the Indian state accordingly.

The first explanation seems most probable. The editorial headed "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy" in May 1959, without a serious prior conflict between the two countries, called for a nationwide discussion on the nature of Nehru's government. Three months later, unlike the Russians, the Chinese reacted very sharply to the dismissal of the first communist government in Kerala. Chinese sources had never expressed to be optimistic about the prospects of E M S Namboodiripad⁶ but when talks about the dismissal of his government were on, the same sources gave expression of their concern and launched a strong press campaign in defence of the ministry. According to the Peking newspapers the Kerala ministry had brought about *fundamental changes* in all spheres⁷, and after the imposition of presidential rule the face of Kerala changed immediately, with repression unleashed by the feudal landlords.⁸ This episode confirmed for the CCP the reactionary character of the Indian government.

Concept of National Democracy

The next important conflict before the border war broke out in 1962 occurred at the Vijayawada congress of the CPI in April 1961. The statement of the 81 parties in Moscow in the previous year had launched the concept of the 'national democratic state', a transitional stage in the development of newly independent states to socialism. Such states were characterized by an anti-imperialist foreign policy, a wide range of guaranteed democratic freedoms and the implementation of democratic reforms, especially agrarian reforms. Communists should participate actively in the working of this national democratic state, together with "the representatives of the forces of progress". B Ponomarev, secretary of the Central Committee(CC) of the CPSU who led the Soviet delegation to the Bombay congress of the (right) CPI in 1964 explained that "the struggle for the establishment of a national democracy offers to the progressive forces the

possibility of offsetting the remainders of the colonial administration, of eliminating the power which was in the hands of the traitors in service of imperialism and of taking in their own hands the destiny of the country."³⁹

The statement of the Communist and Workers Parties had made it clear that "the communist parties are working actively . . . for the establishment of national democracies"⁴⁰, but, though the CCP signed this statement, it has never made any reference to the concept. The CGP used to characterize revolutions in colonies and neo-colonies as 'national-democratic revolutions', but rejected the idea of a 'national-democratic state', as intermediary from the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the dictatorship of the working class. A *Red Flag* editorial immediately after the Moscow conference stressed that only the working class in close alliance with the peasantry can lead the national democratic revolution to its successful conclusion and realize possibilities for the non-capitalist path of development.⁴¹

The implications of the national democracy line appeared clearly from Ghosh's speech at the Vijayawada congress, which, incidentally, was not attended by the Chinese representatives, for the delegation which was already in India for a meeting of the World Peace Council had not been given an extension of their visas. In an article in *Pravda* on 5 April, four days before the congress, Ghosh called for a "broad national association of all patriotic and democratic forces" to defend the state sector, achieve land reforms, control the monopolies, prevent imperialist loans, criticize harmful tendencies in government, and so generally gain influence over government policies.⁴² This article was more critical of the Nehru government than the draft resolution of the National Council, but less critical than his congress speech which made concessions to the strong left-wing presence there.

Alliance with Congress?

Though India was not a national democratic state the contention of the right wing in the CPI was that conditions were favourable to draw both the rank and file and the progressive leadership of the Congress Party into a *national democratic front*. Although a general alliance was still ruled out, the Ghosh-Dange leadership concluded that both the strategies of 'united front from above' and 'united front from below' should be applied in relation to the Congress Party in the longterm effort of building the national democratic front. The alternative draft resolution of B T Ranadive, which was allowed to be circulated by the National Council, did not regard the Congress Party as a possible ally in the front and thus resembled the views of the CCP in this respect.⁴³

In the early sixties, ⁴⁴ Chinese scholars and commentators did not subscribe to the analysis of the class structure of the Indian society by Russian scholars.⁴⁵ For example, they categorically refused to accept the Soviet viewpoint that the penetration of capitalist relations of production in agriculture had to any perceptible degree weakened the feudal

system of landed property. According to one author the big landed proprietors in India continued to own the biggest part of the landed property, to enjoy all class privileges and to practice all sorts of feudal exploitation.⁴⁶ In the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the Chinese affirmed, the bourgeoisie would not be daring to solve the agrarian problem and would limit itself to some reformatory legislation which would remove the discontent of the masses. Instead of risking the evolution of an agrarian revolution into a proletarian revolution the bourgeoisie would join up with the feudal landlords: "the Indian agrarian reforms could, therefore, be nothing else but an attempt to legalize the exploitation of the masses."⁴⁷ The agrarian reforms, according to the Chinese analysis had, without affecting the feudal landlords, created a stratum of rich peasants and landlords who combined their half-capitalist, half-feudalist farming with usurious moneylending and blackmarket. In the final analysis therefore the agrarian reforms were characterized as a "mere redistribution of landed property within the ruling classes. For the middle and poor peasants, overburdened by taxes, usury, high prices and rents, and for the agricultural labourers under the pressure of semi-feudalism and semi-capitalism, they were nothing but a straight lie."⁴⁸

Bureaucratic Capitalism

The Chinese assessment of the Indian bourgeoisie diverged even more widely from the Russian analysis from 1959 onwards. In the editorial headed "The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy" it was written that the Indian big bourgeoisie tended to maintain certain links with the ex-colonialists. From this period onwards the Chinese started asserting repeatedly that the progressive role of the bourgeoisie belonged to the past and put the stress on their negative role. According to one overseas Chinese scholar, Chi-Hsi Hu, the Chinese maintained that once a government of the national bourgeoisie is replaced by a "dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie in a newly dependent country, it will inevitably be transformed into a semi-colony".⁴⁹ Indeed it is remarkable that the post-66 characterization of India as a semi-feudal, semi-comprador and bureaucratic state was, embryonically, already the view held in the early sixties. Chinese party leaders told Harekrishna Konar and K Damodaran during their visit to China in 1960 that since capitalism in Asia was weak, it was bound to line up with imperialism, "whatever may be the attitude adopted by it earlier, as a result of the pressure of the people. There was a swing towards the right in the governments of those countries."⁵⁰ The bourgeoisie being what it is, state capitalism in an underdeveloped country as India can only give rise to bureaucratic capitalism in alliance with imperialism and feudalism.⁵¹ Several references substantiated the argument that there was nothing positive in state capitalism. In India, according to the Chinese, where the state power was in the hands of the big bourgeoisie and the landlords, the so called state capitalism was nothing but bureaucratic monopoly capitalism which

served the interests of the private monopoly houses who, in their turn, depended largely on foreign, especially American, capital.⁵² This accent on bureaucratic capitalism and on the collusion between foreign and Indian monopoly capitalists became more and more stressed after the war in the Himalayas broke out on 20 October 1962.

Before the war broke out it had become obvious which side the majority of the CPI would be on. On 20 November 1961 Jawaharlal Nehru made a statement in the Lok Sabha accusing China of border incursions. The next day Ajoy Ghosh issued a statement as general secretary of the CPI. Basing himself on Nehru's account of the happenings he condemned the Chinese actions as embittering the relations between the two countries. The CCP reacted sharply and attacked Ghosh for having "trailed behind Nehru . . . without bothering to find out the truth or to look into the rights and wrongs of the case."⁵³ While the central organ of the CPI, *New Age* which was controlled by the rightists, openly attacked the CCP, the West Bengal party organ *Swadinatha* criticized the statements of Ghosh and supported the Chinese line on Nehru.⁵⁴

CPI Split on Border Dispute

In fact, already a year earlier the West Bengal unit of the undivided CPI had censured the CEC of the CPI for its September 1960 resolution, "On Certain Questions in the International Communist Movement". The Bengal resolution said that "in contributing to the solution of controversies between two great parties (the CEC) should not have rushed to criticize a great brother party on the basis of one-sided facts".⁵⁵ In such a situation and in view of the two opposite stands within the party on organizational matters and on the character of the Indian state the unity of the CPI could only be saved from splitting if the two wings were prepared not to press too hard for the acceptance of their viewpoint on the border issue. However, what happened after the outbreak of war was that the rightist majority exactly opted for such a line: the meeting of the central secretariat of the CPI on 18 October decided that the McMahon line should be defended against any attack, but did not state that China had violated that line, although S A Dange said so to newsmen afterwards. It transpired that S A Dange, Z A Ahmed, M N Govindan Nair and Yogindra Sharma wanted China to be named aggressor but were prevented from doing so by Bhupesh Gupta, Jyoti Bosu, Harkishen Singh Surjeet, P Sundarayya and E M S Namboodiripad, who wanted to put more emphasis on negotiations than on military measures.⁵⁶

Unlike Dange, the latter group stuck carefully to the resolution of the central secretariat. Jyoti Bosu for example, in a statement in the West Bengal assembly, declared that the West Bengal CPI would do its duty for the defence and integrity of India: "There is no question of surrender for superior military might and all measures must be taken to remove all weaknesses consistent with India's honour."⁵⁷ Thus so far the CPI organization could accommodate both wings, though rifts appeared, as

in Maharashtra where the predominantly right-wing State Council in its meeting of 23 October proposed to the National Council to take strong measures, if necessary expulsion, against B T Ranadive for not acting according to the party line⁵⁸. He was accused of having said that socialist China could not have been the aggressor, which as a matter of fact was not contrary to the central secretariat resolution of 18 October.

The dividing line was drawn when the National Council, with a right-wing majority, in its meeting of 1 November pressed for a resolution which was so radically anti-Chinese and pro-Nehru that the new general secretary Namboodiripad refused to sign, and Jyoti Bosu, P Sundarayya and Harkishen Singh Surjeet resigned from the central secretariat. The resolution started with an appeal to the population to unite in the defence of the motherland against the Chinese aggression, gave unqualified support to the position taken by Nehru, praised the Indian parliamentary democracy and Nehru's policy of non-alignment and declared no objection to arms deals with any country on a commercial basis. It charged that by its wrong and mistaken attitude the Chinese government had facilitated the strengthening of the right-wing reactionary opponents in the country. The resolution finally called for all possible efforts to create a national defence fund and to increase production.⁵⁹

Rightist Rationale

The justification for this stand of the right communists was exemplified by Mohit Sen in an article in the bourgeois weekly *Seminar*. Mohit Sen wrote: "As Jawaharlal Nehru said, we are defending our democracy and our socialism . . . The Chinese aggression confronts us with the compulsive choice of either surviving as a *radical democracy* or going under as a satellite of the Western bloc." Sen continued that all emergency measures, such as a special budget, new taxes, stepping up of productivity and the payment of one day's pay to national defence, would

manifest India's challenge to the aggression and the treachery of China in the form of a *radicalized and awakened democracy*. Or else the danger is real that while we may get the vacation of aggression, as the result of international pressure and aid, *the Chinese will have triumphed. For they would have converted India into a bastion of the Right and destroyed her as a symbol of democratic Asian resurgence.*"⁶⁰ (Emphasis added.)

It should be noted that the official Russian line unlike the CPI maintained neutrality, as they had done in 1959. Some European communist parties, for example the Czech, British and Italian, even publicly complained that it was difficult for them to understand the Communist Party of India.⁶¹ M N Govindan Nair, right-wing communist, even gave vent to his displeasure at their attitude when he declared in the Rajya Sabha, "Communist parties and Afro-Asian countries are not supporting us. We are getting isolated."⁶² At one stage the CPSU even bent over backwards to accommodate the Chinese. An editorial in *Pravda* on 26 October, the day after the beginning of the war and three days after the

onset of the Cuban crisis, stated that while the McMahon line had been imposed upon and never recognized by China, the Chinese proposals of 24 October were constructive and constituted an acceptable basis for opening negotiations. It went on putting the blame on Indian reactionary elements and gave a meaningful hint to the CPI: "A peaceful settlement of the conflict demands more active support on the part of the progressive forces in India. One has to take account of the fact that in conditions of tense relations, similar to the present one, *even some progressively minded people may yield to nationalistic influences and move over to chauvinistic positions.*"⁵³

Very soon afterwards the CPSU again took up its neutralist position, but it was not until the autumn of the next year that the Soviet Union moved from an attitude of "foreign neutrality while actually favouring the Indian reactionaries to alignment with US imperialists in openly supporting them."⁵⁴ The Indian government, however, at the time of the war was satisfied with the continuance and even acceleration of Soviet aid, including military aid.⁵⁵

Changes in Chinese View

What was the Chinese reaction to the border war? These reactions relate to three aspects: Nehru, the Soviet Union and the CPI. In the first period, roughly up to the end of January 1963, the CCP concentrated its attacks on the Nehru government, and refrained from attacking the undivided CPI. For example, even its anti-Chinese resolution of 1 November was reprinted in the Chinese press without comment.⁵⁶

In this period the Chinese press stressed that India had shed its cloak of non-alignment and gradually came to act as a "US tool against China"⁵⁷ and backed this up with reports from Indian newspapers, denunciations by anti-imperialist Afro-Asian states, cover stories on repeated Indian missions to Washington and increased American aid. This was most prominently done in three articles. The first one, "More on Nehru's Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," appeared in the *Jenmin Jibao* of 27 October 1962. Since this article did not any longer maintain that Nehru was a vacillating element who generally represented the interests of the people, but portrayed him as an out-and-out reactionary leader, it is interesting to follow some of the arguments at length. The editorial said:

Nehru, who once (before independence) represented to a certain degree the interests of the Indian national bourgeoisie, has substituted reactionary nationalism for the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution, and has *collaborated even more closely* with the imperialist and feudal forces. Of course there are *still contradictions with foreign monopoly capital* and sometimes under the pressure of the people Nehru showed a *certain degree of difference from imperialism*. But the class nature and economic status of the Indian big bourgeoisie and big landlords ensure that the Nehru government depends on and serves imperialism

more and more . . . This Indian bureaucrat monopoly capital develops at the expense of . . . the capitalist owners of small and medium-sized enterprises.⁶⁸ (Emphasis added.)

The editorial also stressed that the US had moved from a position of opposition to non-alignment policy of India to "vigorous aid" to it, from the refusal to supply machinery and technical knowledge to the Indian big bourgeoisie to cooperation with them, and that, in a word "US imperialism pursues a policy of *paying a high price* to buy over the Indian big bourgeoisie represented by Nehru."⁶⁹ (Emphasis added.)

From this text it appears very clearly that in the early sixties the CCP was of the opinion that India was a state of the big bourgeoisie and the landlords, but that it still had contradictions with imperialism. If this was the character of the Indian state, what then was the ideology of the ruling party, or, "What Kind of Stuff is Nehru's Much-advertised Socialism?" An article under this title appeared in the Chinese theoretical monthly *Hung Ch'i* of April 1963. Apart from stating that it was a modern version of 'reactionary socialism' as a political instrument of the big bourgeoisie and the big landlords to facilitate their rule, the article came to the conclusion that "this state monopoly capitalism of a comprador character is one of the important causes of India's poverty today". This contention was once more stressed when the article asserted that in the hands of Nehru, socialism was a new religion to hoodwink the people and that "he is using planning to develop *bureaucratic, comprador monopoly capitalism*"⁷⁰ (Emphasis added.)

Elements of State Power

This article in *Hung Ch'i* was written almost half a year after the border war and after the article on "Nehru's Philosophy". It would be wrong however, to attribute the appearance of "comprador" as a description of the bourgeoisie to the time-lag, in the sense that the war had brought about a process of rethinking which had not yet matured when "Nehru's Philosophy" was printed. Already in 1960 as a reaction to the Russian stress on the positive role of the bourgeoisie in the new epoch, the CCP began stressing their negative role tending to transform the country into a semi-colony. Given this ideological predisposition, given the fact that in this period there was an acceleration in the collaboration between the Indian and the imperialist governments⁷¹ and given the fact that the Indian government was at that moment China's most obvious external enemy, it is reasonable to argue that the *Hung Ch'i* article was but the logical culmination of the CCP line and not a sudden break with it. Projections which had previously been made on the theoretical level in the fight against a revisionist understanding were, according to the CCP, being borne out by reality. This reality actually had only partially changed, but a one-sided interpretation of it conformed to the ideological predispositions and therefore fitted harmoniously into the brand of Marxist-Leninist understanding which the CCP was counterposing to the CPSU.

In another article in *Hung Ch'i*, "Behind Nehru's Anti-Chinese Policy" which was published in October 1963, the characterization of the Indian state was reiterated. Nehru was defined as meeting the requirements of India's large capitalists, landlords, compradors and bureaucrats, and as leading the country into an economic-financial crisis which was attempted to be overcome by the war effort.⁷² In building up a united front against the four elements in state power the CCP let it clearly be understood which classes could be drawn into the struggle:

Now even the small capitalists and middle classes in cities are finding it more and more difficult to maintain their living. They are the principal victims of the government's plan for the increase of taxation... Even the upper strata of the small capitalist class have begun to feel the effect of financial stringency... Also intellectuals, even the higher levels, can no longer maintain their silence... Owing to the oppression of domestic monopoly capital and the threat of American capital, in addition to the blow dealt by high taxes and prices, the national capitalist class has also become more and more dissatisfied.⁷³

The Chinese strategy would thus make for a national democratic front, but it is significant that in part IV of the *Hung Ch'i* text which deals with "Struggle of the Indian People and the Disintegration and Collapse of the Reactionary Ruling Class", the role of the CPI was passed over in silence, except for one occasion. That occasion, moreover, implicitly revealed that the whole pre-split CPI was playing a negative role for it depicted the "betrayal of one strike by Tan-chi (Dange?)", and let the extreme rightist elements seize hold of the opposition to the "state of emergency", to the "laws and orders for the defence of India", to compulsory savings, and to corruption.⁷⁴

Reactionary Nationalism

The second spate of attacks launched by the CCP was against the rightists in the undivided CPI, but it took some time before the offensive was launched. In the article on "Nehru's Philosophy" the CCP had still been reasonably soft on the right wing. After comparing the Himalayan War to the attack by Chiang Kai-shek's troops on the Russian border in 1929 when the Soviet Union acted in self-defence and defeated the military provocation, the editorial noticed:

When KMT reactionaries launched an anti-Soviet campaign, the Chinese communists were not caught in the toils of reactionary nationalism. Today the communists and progressives in India are in a situation somewhat similar. *Large numbers of them have not been hoodwinked by reactionary propaganda...* In the interest of the Indian people they have, under extremely difficult conditions, stood firm for truth, justice and Sino-Indian friendship and have waged unflinching struggles. History will prove that *it is they who really represent the interests of the great Indian nation and people...* We hope to see a progressive, democratic and strong India on the continent of Asia. (Emphasis added.)

The editorial ended up with an attack on "the self-styled Marxist-Leninists such as S A Dange who have departed from the principles of Marxism-Leninism".⁷⁶

This extract shows that the CCP while extolling the large majority for following the correct line, was still quite soft on Dange who had only "departed from the principles of Marxism-Leninism". The CCP became more critical in January 1963, when it reported the visit of Dange to eastern and western European communist leaders during the previous month in order to persuade them to support India on the border issue.⁷⁶ *Hindustan Standard* of 15 December 1962 had reported Home Minister Shastri as saying that the visit was inspired by the government and noticed that Dange was personally briefed by Nehru before his departure. The CCP attack came in full blast in the beginning of March in an editorial in *Jenmin Jibao*, "A Mirror for Revisionists". The 'Dange clique' was said to be a mirror since it "reveals how the leaders of a communist party in a capitalist country take the road to revisionism, slide down it and end up as the servants and the tail of the bourgeoisie".⁷⁷

Class Collaboration

Revisionists in the CPI were accused on three counts: They negated the class nature of the Indian state and preached unreserved support to the big bourgeoisie and the landlords in the anti-Chinese struggle, gave credibility to Nehru's slogan of socialism instead of exposing the demagogical, fraudulent use of it by bourgeois politicians as was stated in the Moscow Declaration of 1960; and the "Dange clique followed on the heels of the police to take over leading organs of the party committees. Through these actions the Dange clique hopes to adapt the Communist Party of India to the needs of the big bourgeoisie and to wreck the Indian revolutionary movement."⁷⁸ The arrests of Ranadive, Bosu, Sundarayya, Surjeet, Nambudiripad and some 800 other leading communists who were opposed to the Dange line had been communicated earlier in the Chinese press without comment, though the media noticed that some of them had recently been reported reaffirming that a socialist country could never commit aggression.⁷⁹ The media also reported that the action was taken by India after the Chinese declaration of a cease-fire at zero-hour on 21 November had been received by the Indian government.⁸⁰

The precise role of the Dange group in the arrests cannot be corroborated with factual evidence, but it is a fact that the right-wing faction did take advantage of the sudden removal of the left communists in order to seize hold of the party organization in leftist strongholds or to consolidate it elsewhere.⁸¹ Moreover, two rather strange coincidences cannot be lost sight of. On 7 November, the day before Ranadive, Kurane, Ahilya Rangnekar and others were arrested in Bombay, Dange met Nehru for half an hour in order to appraise the Prime Minister of the latest stand of the CPI.⁸² On 21 November, the day before the rest of the left communist leaders were arrested, Dange had another meeting with Nehru

for an unknown purpose. The newspapers also reported that the CPI chairman who was supposed to have flown to Calcutta that day in order to make an on the spot study of the situation in the unit there, could not do so because of "circumstances beyond his control".⁸³ The next day most of the leading members of that unit were arrested. A Calcutta daily reported that the installation of the right-wing Sen-Lahiri group to power in the West Bengal CPI presented a gross instance of usurpation of power with the help of the police, and added: "The present leadership, it may be recalled, had issued instructions to the effect that those members who were wanted by the police should surrender. Any violation of this directive by any member would mean his outright expulsion from the party."⁸⁴ Officially the CPI condemned the arrests. So did Bhupesh Gupta during the parliamentary debates on 8 November, before finishing his long intervention which expressed deep sorrow and agony but at the same time reassured his support to the defence of the motherland, no matter how many communists were arrested.⁸⁵ On 2 December the rump CEC of the CPI passed a resolution which was, strangely enough, worded as follows: "What is needed is a reconsideration of a policy of *indiscriminate* mass arrests and the release of *arrested members* of the party."⁸⁶ (Emphasis added). Thus not all arrested members should be released, and possibly the CPI leadership was only thinking of Achutha Menon, Yogindra Sharma and some others. It was reported that in parliament's lobby, "communist MPs repeatedly declared that not all the arrested communist leaders belonged to the pro-China faction of the party, a point which Dange must have mentioned in his meeting with Nehru."⁸⁷

Superpower Theory

The third attack of the CCP was directed against the Soviet Union. Though throughout 1963 the CCP was entangled in a fierce ideological debate with the CPSU, it was not until the latter half of the year that the CCP accused the Soviet leaders of stepping up their aid to India in order to oppose China. This was done after the conclusion of the long-term trade agreement between Russia and India in June and after the signing of the Non-proliferation Agreement between Russia and the USA. The Chinese concluded that Khrushchev had deserted international proletarianism: Soviet assistance was "not only a new chapter in Indo-Soviet relations but also in US-Soviet relations in alliance with India against China."⁸⁸ In October, after the *Pravda* had come out openly in defence of Russian assistance to India by saying that the nature of this assistance was the same as that given to many other newly developing countries, the *Jenmin Jibao* accused the CPSU of being "munition merchants".⁸⁹

Here again, in embryonic form, is the superpower theory, though at this stage the USSR was not yet labelled as an active neo-colonialist country, but was rather seen as the victim of US imperialism, which gave vigorous support to anyone in the world "who devotes himself to poisoning Sino-Soviet relations and disrupting the unity between China and the

Soviet Union and that of the socialist camp".⁹⁰

What now was the evolution within the CPI as a consequence of the war? The obvious result, of course, was the split in the party. However, it is more reasonable to argue that the war only accelerated a process which had already started in the mid-fifties. It can moreover be argued that the Dange group made use of the China war in order to purify its ranks from the opposition. Several resolutions adopted by the CPI at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963 did not reflect any tendency to compromise with the minority in the National Council and automated an organizational crisis.⁹¹ Till the uncompromisingly radical Dange line was passed by the National Council on 1 November, the left wing, unlike the right wing in the CPI, had publicly defended the party line on the border issue. Nevertheless, some communist leaders have tried to explain that the split was merely a reflection of the pro-China attitude of the left communists. S A Dange explained it as follows: after the National Council had opposed the Chinese military actions, China broadcast appeals against the Indian party, and, "the opposition faction which was waiting for some international support to their ancient and ever-abiding plans of splitism" left the party.⁹² E M S Namboodiripad rejected this kind of analysis, which was part of the

onslaught of the entire anti-China lobby, trying to create the impression in the public mind that the point of difference within the communist movement was the attitude to China, thus bracketing the anti-Congress line with the 'pro-China' line. We tried to explain that the opposition to the Congress government's China policy was a part of our opposition to the class enemy, the Congress and its government...⁹³

Point of No Return

Even without the Himalaya War the CPI would have broken up. Ajoy Ghosh seemed to have held this view. In an inter-party note on the Sino-Soviet controversy prepared for the Central and state leaders he wrote:

In view of our inner party situation there will be a widespread tendency in our party to think that we need not take sides in the (international) controversy ... and concentrate on our own task... Such tendencies will be natural but they can only be described as escapist. They cannot and will not serve even the limited purpose of keeping our own party united.⁹⁴

The events leading up to the split have been described elsewhere and need not be gone into⁹⁵. The CCP does not seem to have publicly reacted on the pre-split activities, though theoretically the organizational break of the Marxist-Leninist parties with the revisionist parties in the world was already called for in the second half of 1963. Chou Yang, deputy head of the propaganda department of the CCP in a talk to the Chinese Science Academy on 26 October said: "Everywhere in the world

where revisionism exists Marxism-Leninism will appear to combat it; and where the Marxist-Leninists will be excluded from the party, new and eminent Marxist-Leninists and powerful revolutionary parties will emerge."⁹⁵

Nevertheless, and though aware of the struggle the left communists were putting up against the Dange leadership, they never expressed their public support. This is understandable since the communists who were later to hold their Tenali convention in June 1964 and the seventh CPI congress at Calcutta had explicit differences with the CCP on the stage and strategy of the revolution. These communists, who later came to be known as the Communist Party of India (Marxist) maintained that India was a "bourgeois-landlord state, led by the big bourgeoisie, which pursues the capitalist path of development in collaboration with foreign monopoly", and that if the Chinese characterization of the Indian state were accepted,

then the national liberation aspect of our revolution stands in the forefront, the edge of the revolution will have to be directed against the foreign imperialists, the contradiction between alien imperialists and the nation as a whole assumes the principal role, and a corresponding strategy of general national united front will have to be substituted in place of the present class strategy incorporated in our programme . . . These differences of ours with the understanding of the CCP are not new, and all the comrades who assembled at Delhi in January 1964 to discuss the outlines of the new Draft Programme had discussed about them.⁹⁷

Appeal for Unity

At its convention at Tenali in July 1964 this section of the undivided CPI had declared to take all decisions in full independence and that hence the question of being pro-China or pro-Russian did not arise.⁹⁸ The resolutions of the seventh party congress at Calcutta reiterated that while assimilating the experience of the international communist movement, the Communist Party of India would discuss and decide all questions on the basis of its own study and experience of Marxism-Leninism. The resolution put the main responsibility for the strained relations in the international communist movement on Khrushchev and made a strong appeal for unity:

At a time when the unity of the socialist camp and the anti-imperialist forces of the world are delivering blow after blow on the positions of imperialism and shattering them, the disunity and disruption in the camp of socialism and the international communist movement could not but gladden the hearts of the imperialists and reactionaries in all countries.⁹⁹

On the other hand the delegates at the seventh CPI congress which was held at Bombay two months later and represented the right faction in the Communist Party adopted the entire spectrum of the

Russian assessment of the CCP. They stated:

The narrow nationalistic and chauvinistic attitude taken up by the Chinese leadership on the border question and its attempt to solve it by armed force caused a major setback to our democratic movement as it created opportunities for the forces of domestic reaction to strengthen themselves and gain vantage positions in the country's political life. This made the struggle against the erroneous political and ideological positions of the CCP leadership all the more urgent in the case of our party.¹⁰⁰

While the Chinese press passed over both congresses in silence *Pravda* immediately reacted very favourably to the Bombay congress, and pointed out that the adopted programme advanced the task of creating the transitional national-democratic state in which power would be jointly exercised by a national-democratic front.¹⁰¹

Delayed Response

However, at the end of the year when the Indian government went over to the massive arrest of left communists the CCP broke its silence. In his justification, Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda said on 1 January 1965 that the left communist party "was to serve as Peking's instrument in creating conditions of instability in the country and to facilitate the furtherance of her grand strategy of establishing hegemony..."¹⁰² Albanian newspapers carried the story of the arrests on 9 January¹⁰³ but it took almost ten more days before the Chinese media followed and gave at the same time a long report on both the CPI congress at Calcutta from 31 October to 7 November 1964 and the CPI congress at Bombay from 13 to 23 December. The reports on both the congresses were equally long, and except for some critical remarks on the "renegade Dange group" contained merely the major parts of the resolutions. The Peking Radio broadcast of 16 January on the arrests and the *Jenmin Jibao* comment of the next day carried much more importance. The main message of the Chinese news media was that there was now a "distinct line between the communists who serve the people and those who hire themselves out as lackeys." The 'CPI' which stood for what became later the CPI (M) was extolled at length by the CCP:

° The Communist Party of India purged out of its ranks the renegade Dange group at its seventh congress... holding high the banner of ... upholding Marxism-Leninism and combating revisionism, the banner of safeguarding world peace and opposing imperialism and colonialism and the banner of defending national independence and striving for people's democracy.

The counter-revolutionary move of the Indian government can in no way arrest the advance of the Indian revolution. The CPI is a party with glorious revolutionary traditions... History will prove that the genuine representatives of the interests of the Indian people and nation are those Indian communists who uphold truth and justice and adhere

to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. The future of India certainly belongs to them, to the people of India.¹⁰⁴

CPI (Left) was also said to be at the forefront of the people's revolutionary struggle and according to the CCP the Indian government resorted to the arrests in order to suppress that struggle, and "to prop up the renegade Dange group." The *Jenmin Jibao* quoted from *The Times* (London) of 31 December: "By arresting several hundred leaders of the left-wing Indian communist party, the Indian government seems to be playing its own hand in the struggle that has lately developed between the left and right wing communist factions." To this quote the Chinese commentator added that in 1962 Dange had followed on the heels of the police but by being purged he again suffered a setback, till Shastri helped again. Finally the editorial made the interesting remark that the government wanted to forestall any favourable results for the Communist Party in the Kerala state elections scheduled for less than two months later: "Shastri hit before Kerala could hit him."¹⁰⁵ The Chinese thus agreed that the parliamentary struggle was an efficacious weapon in the hands of the communists against the government. However when barely one month later the CPI (M) despite the arrests scored a spectacular victory in Kerala, once more the CCP chose to ignore the event. The sudden drastic change in the position of the CCP¹⁰⁶ does not follow logically from the pre-1965 position and needs to be studied before any conclusions can be drawn.

¹ V I Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 23, pp 105-120.

² "Apologists of Neo colonialism : Comment on the Open Letter of the CPSU, No 4" translated from *Jenmin Jibao*, 22 November 1963 in *Communist China Digest (CCD)*, 10 December 1963, Joint Publications Research Service.

³ *New Age*, 5 January 1963, p 29.

⁴ That this is the practice in relation to India has been amply shown in Sebastian Alexander, *Soviet Economic Aid to India*, New Delhi 1975; see also his article in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1 December 1973.

⁵ Fidel Castro, *The Russian Intervention in Czechoslovakia*, National Book Agency, Calcutta 1968.

⁶ "Resolutions on the XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" *New Age*, 8 April 1956.

⁷ Quoted from *New Age*, 18 July 1956, in Gene Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, Bombay 1960, p 325.

⁸ Modeste Rubinstein, "Non-Capitalist Path for Underdeveloped Countries" *New Times* Moscow, 5 July and 2 August 1956. The article was also reprinted in *New Age*, October 1956.

⁹ Chi Hsi Hu, *Pekin et le Mouvement Communiste Indien*, Paris 1972, p 48.

¹⁰ *New Age*, October 1956, pp 6-18. About the progressive character of state capitalism Lenin wrote in 1918 (*Left-wing Childishness and the Petty-bourgeois Mentality*) and again, in 1922 (*The Tax in Kind*) that in the specific Russian conditions of that time a non-socialist element, state capitalism, should be regarded as superior to socialism.

¹¹ *Jenmin Jibao*, 29 December 1956. This and some other articles are quoted by Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, pp 50-51.

¹² Stuart Schram and Carrere D'Encausse, *L'URSS et la Chine devant les Révolutions dans les Sociétés Pré-industrielles*, Paris 1970, and Stephen Clarkson, *L'Analyse Soviétique des Problèmes Indiens du Sous-Développement, 1955-64*, Paris, give a fair account of the

Russian position but unfortunately have not yet been translated. English articles by Clarkson are available in *Problems of Communism*, 1967, pp 11-20, and *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, York University, Canada 1973 (1-2), pp 1-16 ("In Search of a Communist Development Model: The Soviets' Political Economy of India."). Works by Levkovsky, Pavlov, Ulyanovsky, Rastyanikov, Kotovsky and Shirokov have been translated and all propagate the progressive nature of the Indian bourgeoisie.

- ¹³ Ajoy Ghosh, "The Indian Bourgeoisie", *New Age*, December 1955.
- ¹⁴ EMS Namboodiripad, "Prospects of Capitalist Development in India", *New Age*, September 1955.
- ¹⁵ Communist Party of India (Marxist), *Stand on Ideological Issues*, 1969, pp 54-5.
- ¹⁶ Liu Shao-chi, *The Political Reports of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to the Eighth National Congress of the Party*, Peking 1956, p 77.
- ¹⁷ Chou En-lai, "The Present International Situation and China's Foreign Policy", quoted from Robert Bowre and John Fairbank (Eds.), *Communist China 1955-59: Policy Documents with Analysis*, Harvard 1962, p 405.
- ¹⁸ Already from 1956 onwards the Chinese were reported as stressing that Kalimpong was used as a base for counter-revolutionary activities. See A Appadorai and V K Aurora, *India in World Affairs 1957-58*, New Delhi 1975, p 57.
- ¹⁹ Translation from *Jenmin Jibao*, in *Current Background*, American Consulate, Hong Kong 11 May 1959, p 14.
- ²⁰ Chinese Communist Party, *Two Tactics, One Aim: An Exposure of the Peace Tricks of US Imperialism*, Peking 1960, pp 8-9.
- ²¹ Communist Party of India, Press Release on the "Situation in Tibet", 31 March 1956, reproduced from the *Lok Sabha Debates*, Seventh Session 1959 p 1153.
- ²² Harry Gelman, "The Communist Party of India: Sino-Soviet Battleground". A Doak Barnett, *Communist Strategies in Asia*, Bombay 1968, p 111; Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, p 60.
- ²³ "The Truth about How the Leaders of the CPSU Have Allied Themselves with India against China.", *Jenmin Jibao*, 2 November 1963. Translation in *CGD*, 10 December 1963.
- ²⁴ Gelman, *op. cit.*, p 115.
- ²⁵ *New Age*, 4 October 1959.
- ²⁶ Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, pp 64-6; Gelman, *op. cit.*, pp 115-6; *New Age*, 22 November 1959.
- ²⁷ *Link* 9 and 18 September 1960.
- ²⁸ Stuart Schram and H Carrere D'Encausse, *Marxism and Asia*, London 1969, p 312.
- ²⁹ CPI Central Party Education Department, *Guidelines of the History of the Communist Party of India*, New Delhi 1974, pp 114-116.
- ³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p 113.
- ³¹ The most elaborate exposition of the Chinese view can be found in "Origins and Differences between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves", in *Hung Ch'i*, September 1963. Translation by Joint Publications Research Service, from *Hung Ch'i*, 1963 No 17 pp 4-38.
- ³² *Peking Review*, 3 June 1958.
- ³³ *Link*, 5 January 1964. The editorial in the right-wing communist weekly called this an offer "which would go down in history as one of the most generous gestures ever made by one country to another".
- ³⁴ The statement was published as an appendix to the article in *Hung-Ch'i*, 1963 No 17, p 37.
- ³⁵ "Whence the Differences? A Reply to Thorez and Other Comrades", *Jenmin Jibao*, 2 February 1963. Translation appearing in *Questions of Ideology in the International Communist Movement*, Communist Party Publication, No 6, New Delhi 1963.
- ³⁶ Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, p 61.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 62.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*

- ³⁹ Stuart Schram and Carrere D'Encausse, *L'URSS et la Chine*, *op. cit.*, p 71.
- ⁴⁰ Basic Documents of the Moscow Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties Communist Party Publication, New Delhi 1972, pp 44.
- ⁴¹ *Peking Review*, 20 December 1960; Schram and D' Encausse, *op. cit.*, pp 70-73.
- ⁴² Quoted from Gelman, *op. cit.*, p 164.
- ⁴³ Savak Katrak, "India's Communist Split, ", *The China Quarterly*, July 1963; Gelman, *op. cit.*, pp 159-170.
- ⁴⁴ For this section we rely mainly on Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.* Quotations from French sources refer to the French translations of Chinese texts.
- ⁴⁵ See note 12.
- ⁴⁶ Chen Han-sheng, *Les Classes Sociales dans la Campagne Indienne*, 1961.
- ⁴⁷ Zuo Ji, *Situation Actuelle de l'Agriculture Indienne*, 1962.
- ⁴⁸ Chen Han-sheng, *La Reforme Agraire en Indie*, 1962.
- ⁴⁹ Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, p 74.
- ⁵⁰ *Link*, 14 October 1960. Quoted from GF Hudson and R Lowenthal (Eds.), *The Sino-Soviet Dispute*, 1961.
- ⁵¹ Shi Zu-zhi, *La Voie fondamentale des Mouvements de Liberation Nationale des Colonies et des Semi-colonies*, 1960.
- ⁵² Xiao Leng, *La Collusion Entre la Grande Bourgeoisie Indienne et la Capital Monopliste Americain*, 1961.
- ⁵³ Gelman, *op. cit.*, p 174; The statement of Ajoy Ghosh in *New Age*, 26 November 1961.
- ⁵⁴ Gelman *op. cit.*, 175,
- ⁵⁵ "Red Revolt in West Bengal : Text of Unpublished Resolution." *Hindustan Times*, 14 October 1960.
- ⁵⁶ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18 and 20 October 1962.
- ⁵⁷ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 and 31 October 1962.
- ⁵⁸ *Statesman*, 24 October 1962.
- ⁵⁹ *New Age*, 4 November 1962; the Chinese Hsinhua News Agency carried the text of the resolution without comment on 13 November only (*News*, Hsinhua News Agency, London, hereafter as Hsinhua).
- ⁶⁰ Mohit Sen, *Seminar*, January 1963, p 35.
- ⁶¹ Gelman, *op. cit.*, pp 179-180. Rajni Palme Dutt was reported by Reuter as addressing a meeting, urging the Indian government to accept the Chinese proposals. According to the Communist Party of Great Britain, "British and US arms supplies are not for the defence of India but for something else." *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3 November 1962).
- ⁶² *Parliamentary Debates*, Rajya Sabha, Vol XLI, p 886. Chinese news media noticed several complaints in Indian newspapers about lack of support from Asia's anti-communist capitals (Hsinhua, 6 November 1962). Ho Chi-minh wrote to Chou En-lai that the Chinese peace efforts were "a sincere expression of the desire to oppose all dark schemes of colonialism and imperialism (Hsinhua 26, November 1962).
- ⁶³ *Pravda*, 25 October 1962, translation in Hsinhua, 26 October 1962.
- ⁶⁴ "The Truth about how the Leaders of the CPSU Have Allied Themselves with India against China." *Jenmin Jibao*, 2 November 1963. Translation in *CCD*, 10 December 1963.
- ⁶⁵ Government of India, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: Questions and Answers*, Delhi 1963, p 27; Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya, "Soviet Rift and India", ISIS Seminar on Asian Studies, Delhi 1965 (mimeographed).
- ⁶⁶ Hsinhua, 13 November 1962.
- ⁶⁷ Hsinhua, 20 April 1963.
- ⁶⁸ "More on Nehru's Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Border Dispute". *Jenmin Jibao*, 27 October 1962. The translation is in the supplement to Hsinhua, 28 October 1962, p 9.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ *Hung Ch'i*, April 1963. Translation in Hsinhua, 1 April 1963.

- 71 The article "US 'Aid' and India's Anti-China Campaign" (Hsinhua, 20 October 1962), calculated that financial support to India rose from 2500 million dollars in the period 1949-59 to 4100 million dollars in 1959-62.
- 72 "Behind Nehru's Anti-Chinese Policy", Joint Publications Research Service translations from *Hung Ch'i* 8 October 1963 p 18.
- 73 *Op. cit.*, p 36-44.
- 74 *Op. cit.*, p 45.
- 75 "More on Nehru's Philosophy", *op. cit.*, pp 12-13.
- 76 Hsinhua, 16 January 1963.
- 77 "A Mirror for Revisionists". *Jenmin Jibao*, 9 March 1963, Translation from Hsinhua, 9 March 1963, p 1.
- 78 *Ibid.*
- 79 Hsinhua, 13 November 1962.
- 80 Hsinhua, 22 November 1962.
- 81 Gelman, *op. cit.*, p 181.
- 82 Gelman, *op. cit.*, pp 180-1; Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, p 83.
- 83 *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 November 1962.
- 84 *Amrita Bazar Patrika* 14 December 1962.
- 85 *Parliamentary Debates*, Rajya Sabha, Vol XLI, p 222. In his answer Lal Bahadur Shastri was glad to note that Bhupesh Gupta who had been on the Left till then had come over to the Right.
- 86 *Statesman*, 3 December 1962, *New Age* 9 December 1962.
- 87 *Statesman*, 24 November 1962
- 88 "Khrushchev Has Deserted International Proletarianism", *Jenmin Jibao*, 22 August 1963, Translation in *CCD*, October 1963.
- 89 "The Truth about How the Leaders of the CPSU Have Allied Themselves with India against China" *op. cit.*, p 73. The Chinese commentator retorted to the Russian assertion that they were also giving weapons to China: "How can a communist mention socialist China in the same breath with an India ruled by the big bourgeoisie and the landlords?"
- 90 "The Indian Reactionaries and the Anti-China Chorus" *Jenmin Jibao*, 16, July 1963. Translation in *CCD*, 12 September 1963, pp 15-6.
- 91 A fair account of the events has been given by Mohan Ram, *op. cit.*, *parim*, especially p 137.
- 92 S A Dange, *When Communists Differ*, Bombay 1970, p 87.
- 93 E M S Namboodiripad, "The Communist Party of India (Marxist)", *Indian Political Parties: Programmes, Promises and Performance*, New Delhi 1971, p 60; see also *Link*, 10 and 17 February 1963.
- 94 *Link*, 10 May 1964, p 10.
- 95 See especially Mohan Ram, *op. cit.*
- 96 Chi Hsi Hu, *op. cit.*, pp 85-6.
- 97 CPI (M), *Stand on Ideological Issues*, 1969, p 58.
- 98 John Wood, "Observations on the Indian Communist Party Split", *Pacific Affairs*, 1965 (1), p 10.
- 99 Communist Party of India, *Resolutions Adopted at the Seventh Congress*, 31 October to 7 November 1964, Calcutta, pp 17-18.
- 100 CPI, *Proceedings of the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of India*, Bombay, 13-23 December 1964, Volume One, Documents, p 75.
- 101 *Pravda*, 25 December 1964 "Militant Programme of the Vanguard of the Workers of India," Joint Publications Research Service, *Translations on International Communist Development*, 25 January 1965. Adhikari, who presented the report, talked about the joint leadership in the NDF, with "national democracy as its organ of power." (*Proceedings of the Seventh Congress of the CPI*, Volume Three, Discussions, p 38).
- 102 Quoted from Bhawani Sen Gupta, "China and Indian Communism", *China Quarterly*, 1972, p 272.

- ¹⁰⁸ Reported in Hsinhua, 24 January 1965.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hsinhua, 17 January 1965, "*People's Daily* Condemns Mass Arrests of Communists in India", pp 5-7; *Daily Report of Foreign Radio Broadcasts*, 18 January 1965.
- ¹⁰⁵ Hsinhua, 17 January 1965, "Communists Arrested en masse in India", pp 45-6.
- ¹⁰⁰ For example, Hsinhua despatched the following information on 1 December 1969: "At a time in 1966 when the popular upsurge once again swept over India with the Bengal and Kerala bandhs shaking the fortress of ruling power ...the 'Marxist' revisionist leaders were released from jail by the reactionary government to put a stop to all the popular upsurge. After coming out of jail, they, like faithful dogs, served their masters, put an end to all struggles waged by the people and sounded the bugle of fighting the general elections of 1967, thereby channelizing the people's revolutionary enthusiasm on to the parliamentary path."

MANORAMA SAVUR

Sociology of Conflict Theory

ALTHOUGH found both in classical and modern periods, it is to the latter-day exponents of the conflict theory that this article devotes special attention. The theory emerges with such amazing frequency to fulfil a specific function which calls for scrutiny. It is not unusual to come across theorists parading it as radical, and representing Marxism as nothing more than a mere component of its broad framework.

The major function of modern conflict theory is to defend capitalism equally in its incipient forward-looking phase as in its later parasitic decadence. A note of realism becomes evident in observing the presence of conflicting interests in society. Not a conflict theorist himself, Marx has no use for such concepts as "conflict of interests". He pointed out the positive historical role of capitalism and its contributions analyzing at the same time the contradictions that develop within the system. Further development of new productive forces (new in contrast to the feudal), essentially a concomitant of capitalism is hampered by the existing capitalist production relations. These relations are consciously and violently violated by the productive forces in a bid for release to facilitate higher development. The contradiction takes the form of class conflict. A successful class conflict results in a radically different social structure. Secondly, the content of the term 'conflict' as used by Marx is basically different from

the term used by all conflict theoreticians. For instance, the basic thesis of the contemporary conflict theorist is: "Resolution of conflict of interest leads to a higher phase of equilibrium within the capitalist system." The words used by Marx is "to burst asunder", unlike the conflict theorists' desire for "resolution of conflict of interest". Thirdly, an important point of difference with Marx is the insistence of most theorists of the conflicting tendency as an essential part of an unchanging, eternal human nature. Marx sees conflict essentially as a product of society rather than as a causative factor of change.

There are of course minor variations between one conflict theorist and another. My second hypothesis is that such variations in the conflict theme reflect the stage of development of capitalism in the different socio-economic formations (social structure) in which a theorist lives and theorizes. Regardless of differences in perception, it is my fundamental thesis that conflict theorists voice the needs of their masters, the bourgeoisie, and they appear at crucial periods, of stalemate or change, to do their duty.

Power of the Realm

The present analysis of the conflict school begins with Europe of the fifteenth century when feudal polity could no longer cope with the emerging economy, which was qualitatively different from the old. It was the period of commercial capitalism's growth, its ideological reflection being mercantilism. The need of a political theory for the economic development and change was met by the conflict theorists. Development of commercial capitalism called for state intervention the legitimacy of which became an essential part of mercantilist doctrine.

If our hypothesis holds good, then it is not a matter of surprise that the first modern conflict theorist is Machiavelli. Nor is it a sheer coincidence that the earliest development of capitalism took place first in Italy. Close on the heels of Machiavelli comes Bodin, who is deliberately presented as a pure political thinker. Liberal thinkers separate economy and polity in a wilful attempt not only to theoretically delink interacting institutions, but to present political ideas as initiators of economic change. National unification, in turn, gave a boost to the development of commercial capital and the growth of mercantilist theory.

Mercantilists of this period demanded the end of feudal anarchy in the shape of decentralized political power. They wanted to replace it with a state strong enough to protect their trading interests and to break down medieval barriers to commercial expansion. It was commercial capital that financed international trade. Growth of international trade led to rivalry between monopoly trading companies. Rival interests demanded state protection and in turn were willing to compensate the state. Such a stand had to be rationalized. The mercantilist policy therefore tended to identify "merchant profits with national good".² In other words they opted for strengthening the power of the realm.

The modern state was primarily achieved by the "intervention of capital" a steady stream of wealth that poured into the royal treasuries. The wealth included loot and profits; profits first from commerce and later from industry. The monarchs with their full coffers became independent of the feudal lords. They began to recruit administrators from the new middle class, the merchants and the lawyers. In contrast to the old feudal aristocracy this new class represented the loyal officialdom. The kings were also able to support their national army. With this the stage was set for the development of full-fledged bourgeois states in Europe. The growth of national states also required freedom from dominance of a single church. The conflict theorists of this period contribute actively in this direction.

Each of the three conflict theorists, Machiavelli, Bodin and Hobbes will be taken up for consideration in a chronological order. The variation in their thinking is a reflection of the changing need of national social structures. The similarity is a result of their living in the same historical period. Almost as important is their own position in society, which gives a likely clue to the level of the development of one's class consciousness and class alignment.

Brute Force Combined with Intrigue

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) an Italian statesman was the first conflict theoritician. It is important to remember that Italian merchants dominated European economic life from the tenth to the fifteenth century. Their wealth originated from the crusades and direct plunder. Wealth and glamour of the Italian cities soon attracted foreign powers. For nearly twenty years Italy was oppressed by foreign domination and was distracted by wars of aliens fought on its soil. Machiavelli showed a high sensitivity to this situation in his country.

At the same time other developments did not escape his notice: the decay of medieval society, the ecclesiastical authority giving place to the secular, the violent struggles for national unity and the fierce competition among commercial bourgeoisies of different cities, particularly with the Dutch merchants.

Conflict therefore becomes a central concept in Machiavelli's thought. The birth pangs of capitalism were felt violently during his time. The intensity of it made it appear as universal and a permanent condition of society, and the very essence of human nature. This emphasis on conflict runs against both the classical and medieval viewpoints. Machiavelli saw conflict manifesting itself perennially between the common people and the "great powerful". He believed that lust for power and domination is the primary cause both of internal strife and interstate wars. He feared corruption would become rampant in an overly successful state and saw only one way out: create conditions of security and well-being by channelizing man's acquisitiveness through the state. His final judgment was that "a good government rests upon the

foundation of a strong military establishment".³

Viewed historically, national unity was essential for capitalist development. Only with brute force and intrigue could a prince succeed. Although this was a plainly observable fact, "the genius of Machiavelli ... made political development of his day the starting-point of a new method of approach to social and political questions."⁴ Machiavelli therefore boldly pronounced that necessity, not virtue, was the guide for a wise prince. His philosophy was based on rational and material foundations. Nationalist development required politics to be emancipated from theology. Machiavelli's contribution lies here: he paid no attention to the prevalent notion that God is behind the moral order. Growth of commerce, the need for experimentation and speculation had also freed men's minds from blind belief.

Jean Bodin (1529-1596), a powerful French economist and political philosopher, appears at the period of transition from canonist doctrine to mercantilist theory. He boldly pointed out the clear relationship between economic processes and the state. We are concerned here only with the theory which Bodin built to sustain the base. His political philosophy as well as the stand he takes on the methodology of history contribute towards this. His methodology was empirical and rational. For him power lay in the long run with reason and with virtue.⁵ and the study of history was to grapple with the problem of civil and political society. In other words, the study of history was to subserve politics.

Sovereign State Consolidated by Social Contract

The fundamental need of growing commercial capital was a strong central authority which also had to be secular. Bodin frankly advocated freedom of trade and suggested that relations of state were largely determined by economic factors. He also saw growing disorganization in France and in all Europe with the changing economic structure and weakening power of the church. Typical of a conflict theorist, he strove to find some principle of order and stability and found it in *monarchie royale* for France. Bodin became a defender of absolutism of sovereign prince—a secular one of course. His choice was based on expediency. There was no question of monarchy being the only form of government approved by God. He was afraid of the consequence of his choice: the dangers of unrestricted authority of the sovereign. Any other type of government was of little use to France of his time; even democracy was merely an ideal form totally unsuited when inequality of men was a given fact. He pleaded therefore for a modern sovereign state which was to be a source of law and order. One might note that while Bodin sees a peaceful genesis of society out of a single family, he made a sovereign state arise out of conflict.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), the British philosopher advanced beyond Bacon. If Bacon eulogized the divine right of kings, Hobbes introduced the more powerful interpretation—the principle of sovereignty of the state. Although Hobbes's state was based on the notion of voluntary

association of individuals who agreed that one or more of their numbers should represent the common will, he insisted that coercion is the essential element of the state. Complete obedience is due to the state, once it has come to existence. The power that the kings possess, however absolute it may be, "comes from the earth, by their very nature of office".⁶

The social contract theory may not have been particularly democratic in the hands of Hobbes as it was later with Locke and even more with Rousseau. The reason for the differences are historical. Social contract rose in response to the new socio-political conditions. Growth of commerce and capital emphasized the importance of contract in the sphere of economic activity. The theory also consolidated the concept of national state. The doctrine of social contract was the first important solution to this problem. The new middle class was growing both in number and in power and coming in conflict with the absolute monarchs who were beginning to tax the trade of the merchants. The merchants were getting more ambitious. Although commerce was still the major economic activity, they were slowly trying to get control over production which would facilitate their business activity. All the big merchants were monopoly merchants. The theory of natural right and social contract was "most appropriate and convenient to justify bourgeois resistance".⁷ The reason why Hobbes could not proceed as far as Locke and Rosseau is because chronologically and historically he precedes them. Commerce was still the basic economic activity of his time and "conflicting interests were pressing for the establishment of a strong central authority."⁸

Sociology is Born

Hobbes might have made the power of the sovereign absolute, yet he took care to make the individual the starting-point of his theory. This was inevitable for a philosopher living in the age of transition. He also wanted to defend the rights of the up-and-coming ambitious middle class. For Hobbes the individual is the basis of the society. Self-interest compels the individuals to enter into a contract and submit themselves to the terrific stranglehold of the state—his Leviathan—for this was the only method of gaining the greater good and get emancipated from their primitive, nasty, brutish life. "If Levitian coerced, it did so in the interest of the ruled themselves".⁹

The second spate of conflict theorists of the nineteenth century appears by and large as Social-Darwinists, mainly in Germany. England has only one representative. USA throws up a few mild exponents at the turn of the century coinciding with the period of economic crisis.

Britain, the first home of industrial capital, had little need for conflict theorists when capitalism marched triumphantly into this phase. This does not mean it was not a painful transformation for the mass of people. The Enlightenment philosophers paved the way for the transformation of the superstructure as industrial capitalism becomes the basis of economy in place of commercial capitalism. The Enlightenment philosophers

took up seriously the Cartesian notion of reason as the basis of all action. If so radically a new philosophy had to catch on, it had to be broad. Any partisan attitude, any bias in favour of one small class would rouse suspicion and the chances of carrying the idea would be lost. The base therefore was widened to encompass all mankind. The theorists spoke in terms of human nature, of man's rationality and capacity for infinite perfectability. All institutions are man-made and if they are irrational and not conducive to man's development, it must go. The rational basis of Enlightenment got another fillip from Newton's stress on observation and experimentation.

But this trend of development can be dangerous for the bourgeoisie if the working class takes it up seriously and questions the irrationality of a class-based society. This fear resulted in a reaction and in the birth of sociology itself. Edmund Burke was the first to postulate the organic character of a society. But organismic positivism cannot fulfil the needs of industrial capital in the early competitive stage. Political economists emerged to defend the needs of industrial capital.

If the development of commercial capital needed a centralized state to defend it, industrial capital needed freedom from the fetters of the state. State regulation was breaking up in England and France by late seventeenth century. It went hand in hand with the disappearance of monopoly commercial trading companies. At the root of this dual change was the growth of industrial production. The process was not necessarily uniform. Mercantilism reappeared with additions and distortions in backward countries like Germany which would now throw up a number of conflict sociologists.

Rugged Individualism

Meanwhile in Britain, Adam Smith (1723-1790) took up cudgels for the bourgeoisie who were clamouring for freedom. He not only justified competition but gave it a positive moral value and a philosophical justification for the first time in human history. Adam Smith is not our concern unless we want to consider competition as a form of conflict. He is merely mentioned to give continuity to the development of social theory and its interrelationships in practice. Incidentally he is a great intellectual influence on Herbert Spencer, an acknowledged conflict theorist.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), British sociologist of note and anticipator of Charles Darwin, lived through the span of nineteenth century to see the rise of British capitalism to its full height and being overtaken by others. He grew up in the period when Britain was growing in power, blissfully insulated from numerous revolutions that convulsed the continent. The arrogance of capitalism had reached such a height as to become oblivious of the needs of others, and therefore bereft of any subtleties in its relationship with labour. It was unwilling to see labour as a contributor of surplus value and the maker of England into the "workshop of the world".

The working class itself, still unorganized, was living in utter misery and destitution. Other classes including the intellectual elite benefited from the growing material prosperity. Spencer belonged to this class, and under the intellectual influence of Adam Smith saw prosperity as a product of individual capitalist effort. If Adam Smith gave a moral justification for competition, Spencer goes beyond it to make such behaviour a part of the natural world. In other words, he prepared the ground for the acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution. Evolution was not a slow peaceful unfoldment, it could never be so, even for the most insensitive child of industrial revolution, who had seen the raw reality. Evolution is presented by him as an inevitable growth. No group had a right to prevent natural selection. Survival of the fittest is a part of nature, so is the development of a national state. Britain was a part of nature, it was an organic growth and the growth of an organic society should not be hampered by any group, not even the government. Spencer therefore skilfully combined two diverse trends to suit the needs of the bourgeoisie. He presented the individualist organismic theory in contrast to the positivist organismic theory of the French sociologist Comte. Comte was reacting violently to the Enlightenment philosophy which had resulted in the French revolution.

Safeguarding Group Interests

Pure individualism ceases to be of use in late nineteenth century. The state of course should keep its hands off from an enterprising entrepreneur, but it must regulate the growth in the larger interest of this class. The organismic model continued to be supremely significant for England. Competitive capitalism could not last for ever. By the third quarter of the century it had reached the imperialist stage. It was no longer smooth sailing for British capitalism. Capitalist development taking place in other parts of the world was upsetting the balance within the country. Revolution in agriculture combined with cheap labour in America and Argentina brought down the price of wheat, ruining British agriculture.

Between 1875 and 1895 growing industrial competition brought about fall in wages, but not as much as the prices. From 1895 the trend changes. Both money wages and prices rise. The former could not keep pace with the latter. This is also the period when the power of the working class grows.

Britain might have ceased to be the workshop of the world, but she remained the financial centre. In the imperial stage, salvation lies in more intensive exploitation of colonies. Britain with her navy and an efficient administrative system had a head start as the financial centre of the world. Having captured and controlled colonies in all the five continents, British imperialism could grow, but domestic problems had to be resolved. Labour was restive and anarchic behaviour of an individual, even of an entrepreneur, could not be tolerated if England wanted to be the foremost power. Laissez-faire thus became

outmoded. The first evidence of government control was the expansion of civil service and then the introduction of social reform and a spate of industrial legislation starting with 1874. The individualist Spencer now became acutely conscious of the growth of imperialistic struggles and was frightened. He declared it was the duty of the state to shield its citizens not only from the trespass of his neighbour, but from foreign aggression as well.¹⁰ This is the same Spencer, who had earlier dreamt of the passing away of the military society to give place to a peaceful industrial one. In other words even a master mind changes, in step with the changing needs of society, and of the capitalist class for whom one speaks.

Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838-1909), Austrian sociologist and Georg Simmel (1858-1918) from Germany, lived through a tension-riddled society in the process of capitalist transformation. If the former is more aggressive and sees society as a product of military conquest, it is because of his nationality. In the nineteenth century, Austria was vying with Prussia for leadership of Germany. He knew how the first Austrian Chancellor Metternick with the support of powerful Prussian Junkers, was able to use the federal Diet to suppress revolutionary movements and civil liberties; how Austria was repeatedly kept out of the *Zollverein*, the customs union and how, ultimately after the coming of Bismarck it had lost all hopes of merger with Germany. Yet Bismarck entered into a defensive alliance with Austria in order to maintain peace and security so necessary for economic development.

Gumplowicz bases his theory on observable phenomenon, not on abstract generalizations. Therefore, he makes a clear distinction between the processes that arise in simple and complex societies. The former is based on consanguinity and commonality of culture; while, the latter is on amalgamation of originally separate groups, on the role of the state and so on. He saw conflict combined with accommodation, assimilation and internal differentiation which play a predominant part in complex society.¹¹ He gives no place for individual motives, the moving force being group interest dictated by the powerful group struggles of the nineteenth century.

Violence of Capitalist Development

Now to Simmel. He rejected both the organic and idealist approaches as neither tallied with German reality. Napoleonic wars brought about economic distress in all Europe. Countries were imposing tariffs which excluded German grain, and the Junkers were hit by this. Besides, Germany was still made up of a number of states, each with their own currencies, weights and measures, and tariffs preventing commercial development. The conservative Prussian Junkers (the land lords) were the first to agitate for reform. Naturally, therefore, Prussia took the lead in 1816 to break down the barriers and introduce moderate protectionist policies. More and more states joined in, and by 1834 the *Zollverein* was formed which gave a boost to economic development. Unlike in England, economic development did not bring about bourgeois democratic revolution in

Germany. The conservatives and feudal elements squashed it.

All was not so quiet. If it was, Simmel would not have seen conflict as an integral part of society. Workers and various nationalities were so frustrated that the spark of the 1848 revolution caught on, and a number of successful revolts broke out in various towns. A political crisis caused by the end of the war with Denmark led to a counter-revolution in the same year. As a reaction to the rise of Napoleon III, increasing military power of France and national movements in Italy, Germany's military budget had also been increased. But with it came a fear of coup by the generals. William I was, therefore, pressurized to call the extreme conservative Bismarck—the iron man—to the rescue.

Bismarck at last unified Germany in 1867 and he introduced in 1879, at one stroke, uniformity in law, administration, coinage and permitted freedom of movement which gave further fillip to economic development. But Germany had become so completely a Junker state that the capitalist middle class even ceased to demand a share in its control. Germany was set to become a top industrialized nation when she got control over the coal and iron of Alsace-Lorraine after a successful war with France. In other words, a capitalist industrial development was introduced into a semi-feudal polity in Germany. So for Simmel, super-ordination and subordination, co-operation and conflict, centralization and decentralization constitute the building blocks of society. He not only observed but gave conflict a theoretical sanction, for capitalist development was a violent process. In Germany it did not even have the purging influence of bourgeois democratic revolution.

In the post-Bismarckian period, German capital demanded expansion in all directions. Junkers wanted control of the Balkans; the traders the South-east; and the industrialists, the mineral-rich Belgium. In the imperialist stage national chauvinism ran high and every one including Social Democrats clamoured for control of Belgium. Did Simmel alone, as a wise spokesman of the capitalists, escape this? He was perceptive enough to say that all conflict need not be beneficial. He warned of disruptive consequences dependent upon the structures within which conflicts took place. The imperialist war ended in a total disaster for Germany in 1918.

Smarting under US Dominance

The United States of America was a late-emerging capitalist power. It had exterminated the native population and imported cheap slave labour, thereby avoiding class conflict. Besides, it was insulated from Europe; was blissfully free from feudal aristocracy but rich in natural resources. The result was a weak development of the conflict theory in the nineteenth century.

As the Second World War reduced Europe to shambles, the US took upon itself the role of reviving capitalism. Fear of communism was so deep, and the atmosphere of the Cold War so stifling that Jessie

Bernard¹² could do no more than warn at the foolishness of ignoring the concept of conflict. Coser¹³ goes a stage further and popularized Simmel, and C Wright Mills talked in terms of power.

In Europe, on the other hand, conflict theorists now began to appear. They were seething inside, but capitalism in this late decadent stage needs allies, so there is no open confrontation with the US. Conflict theorists of this period are essentially Weberians. Only two of them are taken up for consideration.

Ralf Dahrendorf, a German sociologist, shows three distinctive features in his conflict analysis. First, it is extremely narrow and limited to conflicts arising within the institutions of a capitalist society. He preempts application of this model to other structures. Secondly, he is a-historical. Thirdly, his attack is double-edged, against Marx and Parsons; in reality it is directed against socialist revolutions and against US hegemony in the capitalist world.

Dahrendorf's strange a-historical approach, which runs counter to the grand historical tradition of Germany, is itself understandable historically. It is necessary to go back at least to the end of the Second World War to appreciate his position¹⁴. Germany was defeated in the inter-imperialist war. Apart from the defeat, Germany was humiliated by her ex-enemies; the basic reason is that the two models of capitalist development, fascist and bourgeois-democratic, were intolerant of each other. The allies therefore immediately disarmed Germany, stripped it of industrial development, planned to decentralize and establish control and in addition demanded war reparations. The division of Germany was not initially contemplated. Other factors led to this development: divergence of policies followed by the allies in their own zones of control; differences regarding reparations, frontiers and the future of Ruhr. Establishment of the NATO later, on US initiative, further destroyed all hopes of German unification. The Germans were deeply hurt by the division of their country.

Spectre of Revolution

Truman's inept handling of the international situation and intensification of the Cold War led to a change of western capitalist strategy towards Germany. Russia now appeared as the immediate enemy and revolution the immediate threat. The bourgeoisie could not forget that the wartime resistance against the Nazis were often led by communists. The new alignment based on this reality had to be made. The fate of capitalism in Europe now depended on the resurrection of Germany. In the changed strategy, not only was the noose loosened but Germany became the main beneficiary of the Marshall Plan. Injection of massive US aid, currency reforms in 1948, a large public sector, indicative planning and cheap immigrant labour helped towards recovery and the 'economic miracle'.

The action taken by the United States was neither spontaneous nor generous. Germany began to show awareness of the ulterior motives.

In spite of sensitivity, official relations had to remain cordial towards the benefactor. This did not, however, prevent a sociologist from attacking the smugness of the Americans, which was reflected in their sociology, the Parsonian model of imaginary, placid equilibrium. Sweeping the conflicts and tensions under the carpet, however, is not a European trait. Dahrendorf's attack was merely an academic forerunner of the coolness on the part of German and the other European capitalists towards the "Ugly American."

The anger may be directed against America, but the deepest fear centres around the possibilities of a revolution. Dahrendorf's book therefore opens with a lengthy tirade against Marx and his theory of class conflict. With a past history of revolution and militant labour movement, prosperous Germany cannot imagine that it has reached a stage beyond class conflict. In Dahrendorf's Germany the trade union movement was deliberately revived to introduce democratic relations and to counter any hangover of the previous regime. But the numerous types of unions that had sprung up in the early years now federated into a single one, powerful enough to demand a voice in the formulation of industrial policy.

Industrial Unrest

Dahrendorf therefore does not ignore the possibility that latent conflict of interest may become manifest. But working within a framework of an "imperatively co-ordinated group" in a capitalist structure, the hope is expressed that the state machinery can keep the conflict within bounds. Therefore, Dahrendorf dares to visualize every conflict to resolve and to lead instead to a higher stage of equilibrium. He pulls out the sting and makes conflict a causative factor of change. If we move beyond Dahrendorf's time to the present, we see the German working class claiming not only wages to match the cost of living, but a share in the nation's prosperity! One must also remember that Germany has effectively utilized immigrant labour, in the early stages the refugees, and now imported as and when necessary from south European countries, even when over one million of its native labour force remains unemployed. This is a calculated strategy to keep the bargaining power of the working class within bounds.

Dahrendorf attached vital importance to the conflict situation within the industrial setting, but deliberately confined it to the national borders, and understandably so. This was in the 1950s when the early plan of European revival through integration was looked upon with suspicion, particularly France's suggestion for pooling of steel, iron and coal of the Saar as De Gaulle's disguised method of aggrandisement. The centre of Dahrendorf's concern remains in industry. No capitalist nation today can develop within its own national boundaries. It is also far too late in history to dream of pure colonies; besides colonies have now turned out to be a burden to their mother countries in Europe. German imperialism therefore takes the modern form with its forte in technical achievement. It therefore casts eyes on the Arab world and Africa and other underdeveloped

countries to establish itself as a "non-colonial" power which could supply capital goods and technicians and even export credit to "facilitate economic development". One can understand Dahrendorf's narrow interest of a conflict situation within the industrial setting. Internationalism complicates the issue for a sociologist and it is merely wished away.

John Rex, the British sociologist, widens the scope of conflict beyond the narrow metropolitan countries to encompass the colonies. In his first book¹⁵ he sees conflict as a central feature of a capitalist society, with a qualifying clause: "Conflict could be resolved by agreement on values." He is concerned neither with the individual nor the institutions but with macro-problems of conflict which disrupt the whole capitalist social structure.

Racial Strife

The second book¹⁶ is on race relations in the colonies and in the metropolitan countries, a vital issue for British capitalism. Rex's new provocative thesis is: "problems of race relations have largely replaced problems of class conflict in the modern world". Perhaps British history alone can give a clue to the coolness with which Rex relegates class conflict to the background when labour unrest is so paralyzing the British economy now drifting in the doldrums. Britain has been able to keep going not only because of tight fiscal policies, restraints on consumption and generous US aid but also because of two other important factors: (a) the Labour Party has moved to the right to accommodate to the needs of British capital; (b) the political system has remained flexible. The government quickly responded to the demand for security and equality by introducing the welfare state, and state control replaced private activity in many spheres. Such flexibility permitted the economy to survive in spite of a chronic imbalance of trade.

Closely linked with labour is the problem of minorities, which Rex chooses to see as racial. Immediately after the war Britain was faced with a labour scarcity created partly by continued war preparations including conscription for containing Communism. Manpower shortage would improve labour's bargaining power which the tottering economy could not tolerate. British labour had a history of militancy, and the best way to resolve the problem was found in creating a small surplus of the working force. Immigrants therefore were welcome. With changing international relations, the position changed and unemployment began to appear in 1958. One has to remember that the social security system can appear as a strain on the economy if there is a surplus labour, in this case, of immigrants. The Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed in 1961, restricting the intake. The problem became more acute after many Asians were forced to leave the African Commonwealth countries and enter Britain. Rex voices a deep fear that if the immigrants remain unassimilated, but increase in number and power, they would, like American Negroes, talk in terms of black power and take to revolutionary action.

Rex's interest in the colonies, particularly South Africa¹⁷ is also historical. The decolonized "colonies", the Commonwealth, was simultaneously a boon and a curse for British capitalist recovery. The choice became one between the Commonwealth and the European Economic Community which was to act as a booster to western Europe's capitalist recovery. Britain initially chose the former where its investments were heavy, and the returns necessary for recovery and surplus accumulation. Decolonization does not mean the end of British capitalist interest in the Commonwealth. It has taken the new form of powerful multinational corporations, with a relative shift away from classical extractive imperialism. Under pressure from Black Africa, Britain formally denied South Africa a membership in the Commonwealth. But what is important to remember is that South Africa cannot develop except with the assistance of Britain and other developed capitalist nations. This has given rise to new alignments and some tensions between groups of capitalists.

Model for Inaction

Rex notes this and calls attention to the penetration of what he calls the secondary colonists. It is important to note that while capitalist relations are introduced in one sector, Africa permits and utilizes the tribal organizations for its own ends. Rex's book is a-historical and full of half-truths. This style gives it an air of apparent objectivity but effectively distracts one from the main truth. He also fits the situation into the conflict framework. Rex begins his analysis at the point of production. Introduction of white man's law in Africa makes it theoretically an "imperatively co-ordinated group" in contrast to the pre-colonial days when the native worked for himself and his family, and Africa was free from conflict. In the new situation, however, the white group coerces the black to work for it and even brainwashes it to believe in its inferiority. What is more important is that the white group has effectively prevented proletarianization by drawing in only a small section of the black into the industrial orbit while forcing the rest to live as subsistence farmers in the reserves. Introduction of skilled white labour force further weakens the labour movement. Rex shows that entry of secondary colonizers, Asian trading groups and missionaries, creates a stratified society rather than class polarization in South Africa. But from here he goes on to say that power, not class struggle, is the important factor in the colonial situation. In other words, Wright Mills, not Karl Marx, is correct.¹⁸

This is a blatant misrepresentation of Marxism. The class struggle that Marx visualizes applies to advanced capitalist countries, whereas in an underdeveloped country the major contradiction is imperialism. If Rex could see the alliance between the Western capitalists cutting across the national and international borders and the tensions between them merely as "conflict between economic and political interests", surely he cannot be blind to the possibility of other forms of class alliances developing to overthrow imperialism. Successful revolutions in other underdeveloped

countries through such class alliances pose a threat to the capitalist class and its conflict theorists. What is particularly noticeable is that Rex nowhere mentions the development of powerful liberation movements, especially on the periphery of South Africa.

Rex's prediction is a product of the conflict model. So too are those of Dahrendorf and others. Sociology starts with the assumption that there is a close relation between methodology and analysis. There is an equally close connection between analysis and action. A wrong analysis leads to wrong action. Conflict model serves that purpose, for revolutionary action must be prevented at all costs: that is the conflict theorist's business, serving the interests of his masters. Rex, for instance, knows too well that British power cannot survive without her "colonies."

- ¹ The idealist historians tend to see political unification as the end, giving no causal weightage to the economic practices which precede it.
- ² E Roll, *A History of Economic Thought*, 1953, p 65.
- ³ It is interesting to note that Hughes has made Pareto, Mosca and Michels the heir of Machiavelli. They are all violently anti-Marxist and steadily evolved towards fascist views. Mussolini took pleasure in citing Pareto as one of his masters. See H Stewart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*, pp 227, 253, 271; also J Plamentaz (Ed.) *The Prince and Selections from Discourses and Other Writings of Machiavelli*, 1951.
- ⁴ Roll, *op.cit.*, p 89.
- ⁵ J W Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, 1960, p 402.
- ⁶ Roll, *op. cit.*, p 91.
- ⁷ E Barnes and H Becker, *Social Thought from Lore to Science*, 1938, p 38.
- ⁸ Roll, *op. cit.*, p 12.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ H Spencer, *Man versus State*, 1950, p 117.
- ¹¹ L Gumplowicz, *Outlines of Sociology*, F W Moore (Tr.), 1889, pp 68, 82-3.
- ¹² J Bernard, "Where is the Modern Sociology of Conflict?", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol LVI, 1950, pp 11-13.
- ¹³ L Coser, *Function of Social Conflict*, 1954; *Masters of Sociological Thought*, 1971.
- ¹⁴ R Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, 1956.
- ¹⁵ J Rex, *Key Problems of Sociological Theory*, 1961.
- ¹⁶ J Rex, *Race and Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, 1970.
- ¹⁷ South Africa is the major source of investment income for Britain. See Arragi and Saul, *Socialist Register*, 1969, p 136.
- ¹⁸ J Rex, *Race and Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, p 70.

MALCOLM CALDWELL

Revolutionary Violence in a People's War

THE VICTORY of the people's liberation armies in South Vietnam and Cambodia, which burst with shattering force upon the world in April 1975, predictably gave rise to an anguished chorus of accusations, and forecasts of "bloodbaths to come" in the newly liberated countries of Indochina. This at a time when no one is yet in a position to compile even roughly accurate statistics of the number of victims—killed, maimed, orphaned, bereaved and made homeless—of American and puppet actions in Indochina. The figure certainly runs into tens of millions, not to speak of either the havoc to property and ecological balance, or the devastation to the painstaking construction and productive achievements in North Vietnam by recurrent US bombing.¹ We may, with the utmost confidence, leave to the judgment of history the allocation of right and wrong in this bloodiest of wars. Here, for the record, I shall make some general points and observations.

The obvious starting-point must be the theory of revolutionary violence itself. Here we have evidence of a number of kinds in the writings of those who have conducted people's war and drawn theoretical conclusions—notably Mao-Tse-tung, General Giap, and other leaders of the great Asian revolutions of our era; the curious is first referred to these sources.² Next, we may examine the practice of people's war, using three

types of sources: first, the evidence of participants; second, the evidence of sympathetic observer-participants and observers; and third, the evidence of counter-insurgency "experts." In the first category we have the testimony of such experienced revolutionaries as Kim San.³ In the second, we may turn to classic sources such as Jack Belden and Eqbal Ahmad.⁴ In the third, and specifically relating to the Vietnam war, we may cite Douglas Pike.⁵ And a final area to which we can turn is to accounts of what has historically been the immediate sequence of successful revolutions achieved by people's war.

There is, I think, no need to paraphrase here the theoretical writings whose message is clear: guerrillas waging people's war cannot survive without the support, willingly given, of the people. However, a particularly interesting commentary on a specific instance of theory being put into practice and of the subsequent modification and refinement of theory is to be found in Mark Selden's *The Yenai Way*⁶ which documents the extreme sensitivity of the guerrilla to the feelings and needs of the peasantry.

Strict Forbearance

All three kinds of sources on the practice of people's war concur on the avoidance of violence against the people by the liberation forces. Indeed as Kim San points out, on many occasions the party, by restraining the mass movement, virtually pardoned their enemies who simply came back to annihilate them. Of the Canton Commune he records: "Had the workers not kept discipline they could easily have eliminated their enemies, but they stood by their orders not to kill private individuals. Contrast such generosity and discipline with the orgy of brutality indulged in by the Reaction three days later, when nearly seven thousand were killed!"⁷ Talking of fury of unrestrained peasant vengeance, he observes: "the Kuomintang killed the best and bravest of China's people, the socially desirable, while the revolutionaries killed the degenerate and the parasites, the socially harmful."⁸ The whole book testifies to the turmoil of emotions stirred up in a sensitive person dedicated to the advancement of the people's cause and to human and humane values by participation in such a human upheaval as a revolution. The experience of the revolutionary movement in Indonesia illustrates very clearly the choices—and the consequences—when contrasted with that of the revolutionary movement in Indochina: in the first, merciless decimation and subsequent fascist repression and indefinite perpetuation of rural poverty; in the second, successful land reform and rising production with greater equality of distribution.⁹

Jack Belden was with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) at the height of their struggle with the Kuomintang and had ample opportunity to observe the conduct of the liberation forces. His testimony is consistent and unambiguous: extreme care was taken to ensure that there was no unnecessary or indiscriminate violence. Indeed, the operative principle was evidently that no man was beyond redemption, that even the deepest-dyed reactionary might one day reform and become useful to

the community. He stresses the ethical content in Maoism, and this is a point which has been made many times since, and we should constantly bear in mind the nature of the enemy against whom the PLA fought: a rapacious fascism of the cruellest and most callous cast.¹⁰ Of Mao himself, Han Suyin writes that very early in his revolutionary career "he...formulated the distinction between the liquidation of a class by economic and social means and the physical liquidation of human beings, which he abhorred."¹¹ Eqbal Ahmad's statement of the basic principles and tactics of guerrilla warfare—by one who fought in the Algerian revolution—makes an irrefutable case in short compass.¹²

Sensitive Use of Force

It is interesting to turn to the reactionary 'experts' like Pike. Unlike the propagandists, politicians, and penpushers of the bourgeois press, these 'experts' have to make as realistic assessments as possible in order to be of any use to their paymasters in the Pentagon and the CIA. Pike, in his standard work, comes to the following conclusions:

Terror was used to immobilize these forces, including the GVN officials, standing between it (the NLF) and its domination of the rural areas. For this reason there was little terrorism in Saigon and virtually none directed at top-level government officials...We have no way of determining whether terror was employed by the NLF for internal morale-building purposes, but apparently it was not; the internal documents dealing with criticism and self-criticism of the violence program indicate a fairly widespread distaste for terror on the part of the NLF rank and file...Nor apparently was terror used by the NLF as provocation; at least no internal documents were ever uncovered that so instructed cadres; on the contrary, struggle movement cadres particularly were warned not to allow extremists in the crowd to commit any violence or terroristic act which would provoke the GVN or justify retaliation in force...Nor did the NLF pursue terror in a random or indiscriminate pattern. On the contrary, the killing of individuals was done with great specificity, as, for example pinning a note to the shirtfront of an assassinated government official, explaining what crime he had committed...The NLF made a concerted effort to ensure that there were no unexplained killings; sometimes it went so far as to issue leaflets denying the killing of individuals, asserting that they were killed by bandits masquerading as NLF army soldiers¹³...The NLF theoreticians considered terror to be the weapon of the weak, the desperate, of the ineffectual guerrilla leader.¹⁴

Precisely, and the NLF won!

There appears, therefore, to be an extraordinary convergence of testimony on the tactics of people's war with respect to its pointed avoidance of committing "bloodbaths." Before leaving this aspect of the topic, I should deal with two recurring staples of those concerned with propagating the "bloodbath" myth: casualties in the land reform of the

Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1953-1956; and what is referred to as the Hue massacre. Both have recently been discussed in an extremely valuable consideration of the whole subject of "bloodbaths" by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman.¹⁵ On the first, there is an extended examination of the allegation, and a crushing retort by Gareth Porter.¹⁶ On the second, the reader is referred to the extended analysis in the December-January, 1969-70, issue of *Vietnam International*. What emerges with stark clarity from sources such as these is that there has been systematic, deliberate, and calculated distortion of the facts in favour of manufacturing propaganda supposedly mitigatory or even explanatory of the incalculable war crimes committed by US leaders against the peoples of Indochina.

Moral Superiority

A crucial consideration which most observers and commentators overlook is that the Vietnamese strove throughout to establish and maintain a clear moral superiority over the imperialist aggressors. I stress this because in this the Vietnamese struggle presents a striking contrast with such other armed struggles as those waged by the Palestinians, and the Provisionals of the Irish Republican Army, to cite but two. From the outset, the liberation forces in Vietnam drew a distinction between the American people, including ordinary American servicemen, and the American government and ruling class. Obviously, such was their support both inside and outside Vietnam that the NLF could easily have waged, and called on their countless eager allies throughout the world to wage in their support, an all-out campaign of terror. How easy it would have been for Vietnamese cadres to have burst into US forces' recreation clubs and sprayed relaxing American servicemen with random machine-gun fire! What sitting targets tourists presented in Saigon! How simple for them, or for dedicated supporters in the worldwide solidarity movement, to plant bombs in Washington or Los Angeles and blast the limbs off American women and children!

What the Japanese Red Army did at Lodz international airport, or what the Palestinians did at the Munich Olympics, could have been fashioned and perpetrated a thousand-fold by the Vietnamese comrades and their international friends had they so wished. The point is that they did *not* so wish, and in this I believe they were absolutely right—in both senses. It was imperative that, the more the Americans resorted in their desperation to indiscriminate slaughter of the 'gooks' and the 'slant-eyes', the more scrupulously should the liberation movement cleave to its policy of incarnating a transparently superior ethical stance. The grievances of the Vietnamese were, to put it mildly, no less deep-seated and justified than those of the Palestinians or the Ulster Catholics, but never did they use this as a justification for maiming, blinding and slaughtering US civilians, far less those of other nationalities going about their day-to-day lives totally unconnected with the war. Revolutionaries everywhere ought to commend and hail the Vietnamese and equally condemn other struggles which stoop to the moral squalor of their oppressors; for not only is

cowardly terror wrong it is also politically suicidal. No liberation struggle has faced the odds that faced the Vietnamese; their triumph is also a triumph for what we would not have hesitated not so long ago to have termed virtue—moral excellence, uprightness, and goodness.

The DRV land reform falls properly into what follows successful revolutionary seizures of power. Here the outstanding work for the post-war Asian revolutions is unquestionably William Hinton's *Fanshen*.¹⁷ This is an authentic record of the tensions and forces released by liberation, and read in conjunction with Belden's masterpiece gives the lie to the claim made in the otherwise impeccably researched and reliable *Guinness Book of Records* that Mao presided over the greatest organized slaughter in human history. On the contrary, cadres sought to restrain the quite natural fury and thirst for revenge of peasants who had suffered so much at the hands of village notables and local bureaucrats. Mao's record in consistently exhorting the use of reason, not violence, and in sturdily rehabilitating those demoted and discredited by others more powerful for the time being, is beyond query.

Justice in Reconstruction

But here it may be interjected that China was one thing, but surely what is happening in Cambodia is another? Mock horror and abundant crocodile tears were expended freely by those who complacently accepted the unparalleled savagery of the US aerial assault on Cambodia when the triumphant guerrilla, on taking the capital city, proceeded to evacuate all its inhabitants. But as Charles Meyer has pointed out, Phnom Penh had become, for the rural poor, the hated symbol of all that had gone rotten, corrupt and pro-Western in their society, and they were determined to wipe it out as an effective national centre:

In other times, the peasant army would undoubtedly have razed it, after having exterminated part of the population. In 1975, they were content to empty it of its citizens, who will be purified and re-educated by hard work in the rice fields. Foreigners judge this measure inhuman, absurd, uneconomical. In reality, it is political, decided with clear cognizance of the facts, in order to reconstitute a Khmer community that has been profoundly altered by Westernization of part of the society. The peasant revolutionaries' ambition is to reconstruct their country on the foundations they have freely chosen. They think they will only be able to do so if they totally destroy all the material symbols of foreign domination and create a 'new man' within a peasant socialist society that is authentically Cambodian. This is a political, economic, and cultural revolution that certainly recalls the Chinese experience.¹⁸

No doubt it will be hard for some urban dwellers accustomed to pushing pens or turning ledgers to adjust to labour in the rice-fields, but such hardship as may arise cannot be construed as a 'bloodbath', unless many commit suicide rather than submit to it.

Desperately though the Western media and Western political leaders have strained and squinted for a sign or a sighting of a credible "bloodbath" in Indochina since April 1975 they have signally failed to produce anything better than mirages—projections of their depraved cravings for exoneration. Somewhat embarrassingly, Western reporters staying on after liberation have been unable to come up with any firm stories of massacres by the liberation forces, so President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger have been reduced to grasping at straws, which in any case have turned out in every instance to have been figments of their heated imaginations. The named traitors who ignored warnings to leave before liberation have no doubt suffered the fate promised them, but even so we can only marvel that guilty as they were of the most heinous crimes, they were virtually given the option of fleeing a retribution that, by any standards, would have been amply justified.

Now this leads to another important dimension of the question. Western expressions of apprehension about "bloodbaths" seem to me an obvious psychological reflection of guilt, of self-knowledge of what Westerners would do in the circumstances. I shall therefore turn to consideration of this psycho-historical dimension.

Colonial Psycho-history

Typical of the guilt aspect is the frequently reiterated image of the "bloodthirsty" African "savage" or Arab "fanatic" or Asian "native". Yet no serious student of history would deny that Western expansionists and imperialists, revered in the self-same texts which thus slander our fellowmen, far outdid—and outdo—they in barbarity and callous indifference to human life (other than their own, of course). Whether we look at the record of the slave trade in Africa, to the crusades of later campaigns in the Middle East, or to such manifestations as the suppression of the Indian "Mutiny",¹⁹ the record is clear. The Muslims conducted their resistance to the European crusaders with a markedly greater degree of humanity and restraint, respecting the rights of prisoners where often their own captured were summarily despatched by their Christian captors. The European conquest of Latin America is a horrifying showcase of man's inhumanity to man, with the extermination or decimation of the peoples of North America, the Pacific Islands and Australasia as confirmation that this was no aberration.²⁰

Western conduct in China simply underlines the lesson and the message: as Jack Beeching has reminded us,²¹ European campaigns in China were conducted with a ruthlessness and utter disregard for the Chinese which at times impelled expressions of shame on the part of some of the leaders of these "punitive" and exemplary expeditions. Moreover, opium smuggling, drugs again linking Western imperialism and Asia, was not the only staple of trade: there was the parallel "pig trade" in Chinese "coolies" required to perform what amounted to slave ("indentured") labour in plantations all the way across the Pacific as far as the United

States and the Caribbean. "Merchandise" who became "defective" en route (kidnapped Chinese in the holds of the pig trade ships who, not surprisingly in view of conditions, fell ill) were simply taken out, shot, and thrown overboard.

Politics of Hysteria

We must be careful in making this kind of point not to place a racist interpretation upon it, tempting though this may be. Among others, Stillman and Pfaff have attempted a sociological-historical explanation which is persuasive, and which we should consider now.²² Basically, they argue that Western development of concepts and mental approaches founded upon the pursuit of "mastery of nature" and the application of reason to the solution of human problems and needs not only pushed dramatically forward man's potential for good, but also—and unavoidably, in harness—enhanced his capacity for the infliction of evil. The very idea of "mastery" is itself pregnant with the promise of moral degeneration; when combined with an exponential increase in the physical capacity to enforce it, it becomes rabidly dangerous. The evidence is to be found in the religious and ideological wars, as well as the imperialist ones, which have torn asunder whole nations and continents. Where else in human history can we find equivalents of the horrors of the First World War,²³ the Nazi extermination camps²⁴ the saturation-bombing of German and Japanese cities like Dresden and Tokyo by the Allies during the Second World War,²⁵ followed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki?²⁶ Here we are confronted with an appalling carnage of which Stillman and Pfaff comment:

The crimes are ours, arising from our culture, our West, the same society which today is essentially unchanged from what it was those few years ago when it originated these convulsions, these self-mutilation ... There is a tradition of excess—of violence for transcendental and essentially unattainable goals—that is as much part of the West as is our tradition of regard for individual destiny and worth.²⁷

The pursuit of ends by a "logical" pushing of the means to the extremes contrasts strongly with traditional Asian concepts of warfare and conflict, whereby ways out are left open to the outnumbered and defeated, so that some face may be saved for them while further casualties are spared on both sides.²⁸

Finally, however, we must move from the Stillman and Pfaff liberalism, instructive though it is, to the more solid ground of Marxism. It is woefully inadequate to analyze the phenomena in socio-cultural terms without taking account of class aspects. Decisions have, in the era of imperialism, been taken by one class while it has been another which has had to pay in blood and cash, intensified labour and personal sacrifices of all kinds. The First and Second World Wars were imperialist wars, as were those in Korea and Vietnam.²⁹ As Kolko notes of the Second World War, the outcome of the war was also a decisive worldwide rupture between leaders and led, one which accelerated the transformation of

world politics in ever-growing areas from conflicts between states to conflicts between strata and classes aligned with states . . . Asia was aflame with revolution which transformed World War II in the Far East almost immediately . . . into a civil war releasing a vast liberation movement that would eventually eclipse European affairs and define the larger destiny of world politics for the next generation.³⁰

It is in this kind of context that we must see the significance of the outcome of the Indochina war and the accompanying bleats of "bloodbaths" from the vanquished. For who can doubt that the events of April 1975 signal a historically significant watershed, and that the bell tolls ever more clearly for that class which has for so long unleashed such stupefying slaughter in defence of its economic interests? Unable to envisage any alternative to brute and naked force they impute to the victors the actions which they themselves would have had no hesitation in taking were circumstances reversed, a fact only too well and bloodily testified to by that tract of history littered with corpses which they dominated. Their dominance successfully challenged, they bluster and accuse. But the main trend in the world today is revolution and nothing at all that they can do can now reverse this inexorable and accelerating trend. As the revolution proceeds, so too does mankind proceed slowly but steadily towards a world where "bloodbaths" themselves will be, like the class which has launched so many, a horrible nightmare of the past.

¹ See the edited record of testimony to the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal Hearings published by Penguin Books, London, *Against the Crime of Silence*, 1971.

² There are abundant editions available of the work of Chairman Mao, Premier Kim Il Sung, General Giap, and other outstanding leaders of Asian revolutions, and I would like to draw attention to an excellent exposition by Phoumi Vongvichit, a prominent leader of the Laotian people: *Laos and the Victorious Struggle of the Lao People against U S Neo-Colonialism*, Neo Lao Haksat Publications.

³ Nym Wales and Kim San, *Song of Ariran*, Ramparts Press, San Francisco 1973; this extraordinary book is required reading for those seriously interested in the subject.

⁴ J Belden, *China Shakes the World*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1970; Eqbal Ahmed, "Revolutionary Warfare", M Gittleman (Ed.), *Vietnam*, London 1966.

⁵ D Pike, *Viet Cong*, The M I T Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1966.

⁶ Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1971,

⁷ Nym Wales and Kim San, *op. cit.*, p 171.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 187.

⁹ For a piquant interview of Ho Chi-minh by Ernst Utrecht see document section, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 3, No 2, 1973; for a refutation of the wild Western estimate of the numbers killed in the North Vietnamese land reform see D Gareth Porter, "The Myth of the Bloodbath: North Vietnam's Land Reform Reconsidered", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 5, No 2, 1973.

¹⁰ See the recent book by L E Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1974, on KMT fascism. Some of the best accounts of the corruption and greed of the Chiang Kai-shek clique is to be found in the writings of Americans who represented their country in China during the period, of which I shall refer only to a handful: J S Service, *Lost Chance in China*, Random House, New York 1974; J T Davies, *Dragon by the Tail*, Robson Books, London 1974; (on Stilwell) Barbara W Tuchman: *Sand Against the Wind*, Macmillan, London 1970; KE Shewmaker,

Americans and Chinese Communists, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1971; J F Melby, *The Mandate of Heaven*, London 1968. Han Suyin's three-volume autobiography-history (*The Crippled Tree*, *A Mortal Flower*, and *Birdless Summer*) is invaluable account of the degeneracy of the Kuomintang.

- ¹¹ Han Suyin, *The Morning Deluge*, Jonathan Cape, London 1972, p 217.
- ¹² I have made two attempts to survey and summarize some of the relevant literature and considerations in *The Chainless Mind*, Hamish Hamilton, London 1968, pp 16-20 and 97-223; and "Subversion or Social Revolution in South East Asia?" in M Leifer (Ed.) *Nationalism, Revolution and Evolution in South-East Asia*, University of Hull, 1970.
- ¹³ The bandits were most commonly CIA-trained assassination squads who went round killing, raping and committing other atrocities disguised as "Vietcong guerrillas" (See, for example, report in *Daily Telegraph*, 21 October 1965).
- ¹⁴ The excerpts quoted are drawn from pp 250 and 251 of his book, cited in footnote 5 above.
- ¹⁵ *Counter-revolutionary Violence: Bloodbaths in Fact and Propaganda*, Warner-Moduler Publications, Inc., Module 57, 1973, pp 1-46.
- ¹⁶ D Gareth Porter *op. cit.*
- ¹⁷ Pelican, London 1966; J Myrdal's *Report from a Chinese Village*, Penguin Books, London 1953, has interviews with those who participated in the liberation period.
- ¹⁸ "Rebuilding Cambodia: A Daring Gamble", *New York Times*, 16 May 1975.
- ¹⁹ For those unfamiliar with the abominable atrocities committed by the British in putting down the "Mutiny" (First National War of Independence) see the pretty re-trained account by M Edwardes: *Red Year*, Hamish Hamilton, London 1973; an interesting commentary on European attitudes in the imperial age is that by V G Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1969. H Golwitz, *Europe in the Age of Imperialism*, Thames & Hudson, London 1970, discusses the necessity of inculcating racist attitudes in the peoples of the Western imperialist countries in order to be able to effect overseas conquest and the subjugation of "inferior" societies without the normal scruples about methods.
- ²⁰ The literature in this area is depressingly vast, but it would be remiss not to draw attention to two recent and readily available works which arouse the profoundest feelings of abhorrence at the events they record: V D Bonilla, *Servants of God or Masters of Men?* Penguin Books, London 1972; and Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Pan Books, London 1972.
- ²¹ *The Chinese Opium Wars*, Hutchinson, London 1975.
- ²² E Stillman and W Pfaff, *The Politics of Hysteria*, Gollancz, London 1964.
- ²³ Few conflicts have been better served by sensitive, literate, and talented observers; it would be invidious to single out contributions to the record, but works such as Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That*, Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War*, Frederic Manning's *Her Privates We*, Charles Carrington's *Soldier from the Wars Returning*, and the 1914-18 war novels of Ford Madox Ford (*Some Do not*, *No More Parades*, *A Man Could Stand Up*, and *Last Post*) may serve as an introduction; nor should we overlook the classic *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Remarque, later made into a memorable film.
- ²⁴ In addition to the liquidation of nearly six million Jews, the Nazis subjected the hundreds of millions of people in the territory they occupied — and more particularly in Eastern Europe and in Russia — to the extremes of fascist terror and bestiality.
- ²⁵ See D Irving, *The Destruction of Dresden*; according to his estimate 135,000 civilians were killed in the course of one night as a result of decisions taken with chilling deliberation by Britain's then civilian and military leaders. The first raid on Tokyo on 9 March 1945 incinerated 125,000 Japanese civilians, again by deliberate policy. Gabriel Kolko accurately captures the moral atmosphere of the then leaders of the class which today brays hypocritically about "bloodbaths": "The basic moral decision that the Americans had to make during the war was whether or not they would violate inter-

national law by indiscriminately attacking and destroying civilians, and they resolved their dilemma within the context of conventional weapons. Neither fanfare nor hesitation accompanied their choice, and in fact the atomic bomb used against Hiroshima was less lethal than massive fire bombing. The war had so brutalized American leaders that burning vast numbers of civilians no longer posed a real predicament by the spring of 1945. Given the anticipated power of the atomic bomb, which was far less than that of fire bombing, no one expected small quantities of it to end the war. Only its technique was novel, nothing more. By June 1945 the mass destruction of civilians via strategic bombing did impress Stimson as something of a moral problem, but the thought no sooner arose than he forgot it, and in no appreciable manner did it shape American use of conventional or atomic bombs. "I did not want to have the United States get the reputation of outdoing Hitler in atrocities", he noted telling the President on June 6. There was another difficulty posed by mass conventional bombing, that was its very success, a success that made the two modes of human destruction qualitatively identical in fact and in the minds of the American military. "I was a little fearful," Stimson told Truman, "that before we could get ready the Air Force might have Japan so thoroughly bombed out that the new weapon would not have a fair background to show its strength." To this the President "laughed (sic) and said he understood." (G Kolko, *The Politics of War*, pp 539-540.)

²⁶ For discussions of the reasons behind the American decision to drop the two atomic bombs which took 140,000 lives instantly, wounded countless others in a peculiarly horrifying way, drove thousands to permanent madness, and takes a toll to this day, see G Kolko, *op. cit.*, pp 539-43, 561, 567 and 595-597; and J Toland, *The Rising Sun*, Cassell & Co., London 1970, pp 761 *et seqq*; D Bergamini, *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy*, William Morrow, New York 1970, discusses the impact of the Hiroshima bomb on Emperor Hirohito's timing of a surrender he had already planned.

²⁷ Stillman and Pfaff: *op. cit.*, pp 8, 13.

²⁸ This was one factor entering into the American decision to escalate from "special war" in which their personnel acted merely as advisers to ARVN units, to direct intervention; as Halberstam, among others, reports (*The Making of a Quagmire*, Bodley Head, London 1965, pp 181-182 *et passim*) it drove US military advisers frantic with exasperation when ARVN units would "surround" the enemy on only three sides, so to speak, thus leaving a loophole for enemy withdrawal (something logical, of course on two scores: one, it saved lives; and two, it kept open the prospect that with tables turned, the compliment might be returned. It lies, too, behind the manner in which Saigon was finally liberated—the "beautiful vase" was preserved and the "rats" inside driven out, without sledgehammer being taken to both, which would have been the American way (destroying a city to "save" it).

²⁹ The First World War cost some 30 million lives; the second an estimated 50 million; and the Korean war an estimated 2 million (5 million casualties), of which four-fifths came *after* the US had resubjugated South Korea (resulted directly or indirectly from US invasion of the North). As indicated earlier in the text, estimates of the carnage in Indochina are as yet incomplete. But of course these are but spectacular incidents in a history of imperialism continuously characterized by bloodshed, brutality and the impoverishment, degradation and starvation of people. Contemplate for a moment compiling a catalogue in which the itemized entries run all the way through from the earliest violent encounters between the pioneers of an expanding West and the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America to the present—the Portuguese and Spaniards in South America, the British in India and throughout their Empire, the Americans against the indigenous peoples of the subcontinent and against the Filipinos, and so on endlessly until the technological horror of the Vietnam war.

³⁰ G Kolko, *op. cit.*, pp 594, 595.

NOTE

Foreign Monopolies Dominate Indian Drug Industry

THE HATHI Committee Report, submitted to the government on 6 April 1975, has made about 200 recommendations to make essential drugs available to the masses at reasonable prices. An important proposal is "nationalization of the foreign sector". A close study of the working of the "foreign sector" in the drug industry would clearly indicate the need for such a step though the government does not seem to be spurred by any sense of urgency.

The balance sheets of thirty topmost foreign companies for the years 1960 to 1970 disclose that these companies had hiked up prices by 400 per cent over the manufacturing cost and reaped fabulous profits. They remitted about Rs 100 crores abroad over the last 15 years. Concentrating on the production of specific formulations, they deliberately avoided bulk production especially of essential drugs in which the profit rate is relatively low.

Drug industry in India is of fairly recent origin. Though the first unit came into existence as far back as 1901 the industry did not make any headway until 1939 when it met only 13 per cent of requirements. The years 1940 to 1953 witnessed a period of growth, when foreign firms went in for domestic production. However, it was only with the progressive banning of imports that these companies started taking a keen interest in the manufacture of formulations which turned out to be a highly paying business. Even then, drug manufacture has trailed at least ten years behind the developed countries.

In 1973, India had about 2800 companies engaged in the production of bulk drugs costing Rs 660 million and formulations worth Rs 3700 million. A small number of 118 firms controlled approximately 80 per cent of total output. Out of these, only 79 companies were actually engaged in the production of ethical drugs making the rest absolutely dependent on them. In this group of 79, 47 were foreign-owned. Table I shows the market cornered by the overseas firms.

Foreign monopolies concentrate their production on formulations or compounds because profit is more prolific than in bulk drugs. Of the total production of 4600 tonnes of bulk drugs in the organized sector

TABLE I

SHARE OF FOREIGN SECTOR IN DRUGS SOLD IN INDIA

Drug Group	Share of Foreign Companies in All-India Sales (per cent)
Antibiotics	80.00
Vitamins	80.00
Tonics	56.00
Haosatinics	88.00
Analgesics	72.00
Anti-rheumatics	82.10
Cough syrups	83.30

SOURCE: L K Mutatkar, "Drug Control Order Futile", *Economic Times*, 1 May 1975, p 5.

in 1973, foreign firms accounted for 500 tonnes, a mere 11 per cent. Indian private and public sectors respectively contributed 2900 and 1200 tonnes. The two recently set up public sector units are engaged largely on the making of bulk drugs.

Formulations made by these two units were valued at only Rs 200 million out of a total Rs 3700 million turnover in the Indian market. Eighty per cent of the formulations are produced by 28 multinationals and 18 of their affiliates. Multinational firms do not go in for basic drugs in which the turnover ratio is less than unity. In formulations on the other hand it is as high as 1:7.5, a powerful incentive to spread the net far and wide. During the last two years, firms like Sandoz, Roche, Johnson & Johnson have introduced into the market common formulations which were already being made by the domestic small-scale sector. Not content with this, compound drugs are imported from foreign principals at exorbitant prices after slight modifications of formulae.

Remedy Worse than Disease

Within its narrow range of bulk-drug production, the foreign sector confines itself to high money-value and low-tonnage drugs, starting frequently from late intermediaries or even penultimates imported from parent organizations. Whereas the Indian sector produces bulk drugs valued at Rs 1.25 lakhs per tonne, the foreign sector controls the production of bulk drugs at Rs 3.5 lakhs per tonne, and exclusively for their end-product, the formulations. As a result, even with government's price controls the foreign firms have managed to maintain an enviable profit rate while the Indian companies recorded a profit decline by 21 per cent. While foreign companies were permitted to import bulk drugs for their formulations, the Indian units which applied for the import licences were told to produce them before their formulations could be permitted. Most of the multinationals import bulk material from the foreign principals at quotations higher than elsewhere thus helping the parent companies amass excessive profits at the expense of Indian

consumers. The government's direct responsibility for the foreign dominance in formulation drugs is all too obvious.

A scrutiny of the product-mix of private companies, multinationals in particular, is most revealing. A large part of the total output consists of drugs which are neither life-saving nor pain-killing, but meant for the use of a small upper stratum of society. Figuring prominently among these preparations are vitamins, tonics and deficiency drugs not specific to any disease, and accounting for 25 per cent of the total manufacture in the foreign sector. These are made not for the masses but for the richer sections who are habitual users. While it is true that the masses of the poor who barely get two meals a day are badly undernourished in terms of important nutrients, minerals and vitamins, it is the well-fed rich who swallow these pills, tonics and 'deficiency' drugs. Cough syrup which accounts for about five per cent of the total production is a common household remedy; but we are importing all its basic ingredients. About 14 per cent of the drugs produced are analgesics, tranquilizers and sedatives. Sale of vitamins is 65.2 per cent of the total turnover in the case of E Merck, and 20.0, 18.1, 31.9, 49.5 respectively for Pfizer, Glaxo, Lederle and Abbot. Tonics form 13.5 and 23.8 per cent of the total sales done by Parke Davis and Sandoz. Cough Syrups form 21.3 per cent of the total sales by Parke Davis, the corresponding percentages being 16.4 and 13.8 for Boots and May & Baker. Analgesics account for 18.9 per cent of the production of Hoechst and 13.2 per cent of John Wyeth.¹

Tricks of the Trade

Manufacture of vitamins has led to large-scale abuse besides draining scarce foreign exchange. Despite the fact that excess of vitamins beyond a certain quantity cannot be absorbed by the body, many firms are manufacturing tablets with higher vitamin content than necessary. For example, no human being needs more than 1.5 mg of vitamin B per day; but, there are preparations containing 100 mg per tablet, in some cases even more than the maximum requirement for the most acute deficiencies. Examples of such products are Becosule, Neurobion, Surbex and Tri-redisol H. At the same time, production of such medicines which can cure specific diseases is limited. There is no better indication of the fact that in the foreign sector drugs are made not to fight disease, but to augment profitability. Only 21.5 per cent of the total drugs produced in India are meant to cure specific diseases. Considering the various diseases endemic in the country like leprosy, malaria and tuberculosis and a host of others, this is profit-motive gone mad. Table II shows the foreign sector in the production of some vital drugs.

It is a common practice followed by foreign firms to sell the very same product with minor modifications under different brand names, which leads to enormous price increases for the packing and sales promotion expenses involved. It has been estimated that in many cases selling expenses constitute about 35 per cent of the cost. Large sums are

TABLE II

FOREIGN FIRMS IN MANUFACTURE OF VITAL DRUGS

Tetracycline Hel	10 per cent
Analgin	.01 per cent
Iodochlorhydroxy	Nil
Thiacetazom	Nil
Acetyl Salicylic Acid	Nil
Diphtheria Toxoid	Nil
Tetanus Toxoid	Nil

SOURCE: *Myth and Reality of Drug Industry*, Standing Committee of the National Convention on Economic Independence and Perspective of Drug Industry, pp 23-31.

spent on free samples given to the medical practitioners. Sometimes, even 15 to 20 per cent of the total turnover is supplied as free samples in a bid to influence the medical practitioner to prescribe the advertised brands.

Though advertisements are beamed at the medical profession, sales promotion expenditure is the highest for the drug industry. Fancy packing, too sophisticated for the needs of the Indian population, further inflates the price. Brand names enable these companies to charge heavier prices by making it difficult to estimate the cost on the basis of which prices can be controlled. Undoubtedly elimination of brand names and their substitution by generic names are the first essentials towards bringing down pharmaceutical prices to reasonable levels.

The drug industry shows serious imbalances. In many cases installed capacity is less than licensed capacity and actual production much less. This is especially true of essential drugs with low profit margins. For instance, production of drugs for leprosy is only 12 per cent of installed capacity and for T B only 14 per cent, while in inessential drugs the output sometimes surpasses the licensed capacity! The National Committee on Science and Technology found twenty companies producing far in excess of installed capacity. Table III gives the relation of production to licensed capacity in 14 companies.

Gold Rush

The foreign sector has struck it rich in formulation-making and brand-fiddling, as well as in creating essential drug shortages and exceeding licensed capacity where profit margin is high. A good part of the profits thus derived is remitted abroad. By virtue of monopoly power the foreigners block the growth of the Indian sector.

The profit rate of the foreign monopolies is much higher than that of Indian companies. In 1970-71, it was 24.4 per cent on capital employed, while Indian manufacturers made only 8.7 per cent. Whereas the Indian companies earned only 8.1 per cent on sales, their foreign counterparts were able to make profits ranging from 20 to 37 per cent and pay out dividends between 25 and 100 per cent.

TABLE III

PRODUCTION AND CAPACITY

Name of Company	Item of Production	Production as % of Installed Capacity
1 Burroughs Wellcome	Bephenium	200.0
	DCC	330.6
	Isoprenaline Sulphate	252.4
2 CIPLA	Succinyl Choline Chloride	1074.0
	16-D Hydrotrignelone	8.0
3 May & Baker	Metronidazole	1273.0
	Promethazine Hel	411.0
4 Roche Products	Dehydromotine	20.0
	Vitamin A	179.0
5 Pfizer	Chlorpropamide	605.0
	Oxytetracycline	375.0
6 Glaxo Laboratories (I)	Beta Lonone	167.0
7 Wyeth Lal	Methyl Testosterone	164.0
8 Cyanamid India	Tetracycline	182.3
9 CIBA of India	Crude Quinine	162.0
10 Merck Sharp & Dohme	Vitamin B 12	172.0
11 Bayer India	Chloroguin	258.0
	Entodon	Nil
12 Suhrid Geigy	Xylocaine	305.0
13 Atul Products	Menadione Bisulphate	244.0
14 Sarabhai Chemicals	Vitamins	218.0

SOURCE: *Myth and Reality of Drug Industry*, pp 38-40.

Robbing the Till

Findings of a departmental study reveal that profits (after taxation) in the American drug industry stood at 19.3 per cent and were almost double the manufacturing sector's national average of 9.7 per cent. Thus, the great breakthrough in medical sciences which would have become a boon to the suffering millions has been subordinated to the insatiable greed of the drug cartels. This is more true of India where the rate of profit is even higher than in USA, and prices charged are the highest in the world as disclosed by the Kefauver Committee. It is also true that while drug prices have declined throughout the world, they showed an increase of about 42 per cent from 1961 to 1970 in India.

The dominance of foreign capital in the drug industry has been costing the Indian economy dear in terms of depleted foreign exchange. These foreign companies started business in India with nominal initial capital. High profits enabled them to expand their capital base by reinvesting

a part of their profits. With the booming rate of returns, remittances abroad kept on mounting as repatriation of profits, royalties and fees. Today these add up to about 60 million rupees per annum. Table IV shows remittances from India by some of the foreign drug companies.

TABLE IV
REMITTANCES BY FOREIGN COMPANIES

Name	Amount Repatriated (in Rs lakhs)	
	1970-71	1971-72
1 Pfizer	68.20	68.20
2 Ciba Geigy of India	35.88	23.54
3 Alkali Chemical Corporation	34.63	32.20
4 Glaxo Laboratories (I)	32.82	62.10
5 Chesebrough-Pond's	20.87	20.60
6 Cyanamid India	24.10	24.10
7 John Wyeth	40.74
8 Bayer India	22.53
9 Beecham (India)	6.50	* 28.48
10 Roche Products	16.80	16.53
11 Parke Davis	16.51	26.25
12 Merck Sharp & Dohme	21.20	26.20

SOURCE: *Myth and Reality of Drug Industry*, pp 32-33.

* Figure relates to 1972-73.

Out of the total of Rs 80 million invested in Glaxo, foreign investment was merely Rs 3 million, the assets of an erstwhile trading subsidiary set up with Rs 1.5 lakhs foreign equity capital. Another company with foreign investment of only Rs 8000 is remitting abroad Rs 60,000 per year in dividends and royalties.²

The contention that foreign companies act as carriers of the latest technology does not hold water. When a new drug is invented abroad, in the beginning it is imported in the form of samples. Thereafter, multinational firms obtain an import licence. Then they start importing basic chemicals for manufacture in India, and by the time the drug is compounded in the country a period of 12 to 15 years would have elapsed. Meanwhile a new medicine is discovered. Consequently, India lags behind the Western world by at least a decade and a half in drug technology. For example, it took 18 years for Sulphamylamide to be made in India and, 30 years after its manufacture abroad Sulphisoxazol is obtainable only as an imported drug.³ To make matters look still worse, drug research work conducted by the foreign companies bears no relation to the Indian conditions and types of diseases.

The case for nationalization of the foreign sector in drug industry is most obvious. Yet, it is surprising how the Hathi Committee has been reluctant to include this suggestion in its report. It was only after one member, Chawda, insisted that his note of dissent demanding nationalization be incorporated in the final report that it was recommended as a majority view. The committee made several other recommendations aimed at eliminating or severely restricting the harmful role of the foreign corporations.

The committee recommended that foreign companies be obliged to shift their operations from the highly profitable manufacture of formulations (using imported basic drugs) to basic drugs within a period of three years. Another major recommendation is that within one year they should switch over to bulk drugs to the extent of 50 per cent and share the remaining 50 per cent with Indian companies for formulations. It also suggested that foreign companies should be issued new licenses to manufacture bulk drugs only when Indians are not coming forward to do so. Also, foreigners should be permitted neither capacity expansion in vitamins and tonics, nor output of additional items, nor beyond the licensed capacity. It has also been urged to bring down foreign-owned equity share progressively to 25 per cent.

Who Is Afraid of Whom?

The powerful foreign monopolies knew what to do and took a firm stand. They have been lobbying for new licences, making it clear that they have no intention of sharing production with Indian companies. Bowing to the pressure tactics, government has been dragging its feet. Petroleum and Chemicals Minister K D Malaviya on 5 May 1975 pleaded for postponing consideration of the Hathi Committee Report till the next session of parliament. In Delhi on 27 May, he said that there would be no doctrinaire approach to the question of takeover of multinational drug firms and that they would be allowed to continue in business in order to make sure that life-saving drugs do not disappear from the market! Is the government so powerless to prevent the foreign sector from indulging in anti-social practices like creating artificial shortage of life-saving drugs?

The sickness in the drug industry, diagnosed in this note, cannot be effectively treated while foreign capital holds sway. Even the Indian monopolies should be handled with more firmness. Public health is the responsibility of the government. It should not allow drug manufacturers to continue profiting from human suffering and, worst of all, let them get away with impunity.

MEENA GUPTA

¹ L K Mutatkar, "Drug Control Order Futile", *Economic Times*, 1 May 1975, p 6.

² B V Rangarao, "Indian Drug Industry", *Mainstream*, 1 March 1975, p 18.

³ S Ranga Rao, "Pharmaceutical Industry in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26 February 1972.

COMMUNICATION

Marx, Samuelson and King

IN THE past, bourgeois economists chose to ignore Marx by conspicuous silence. The soundness of the picture of long-run capitalist development given by Marxian economic analysis has been proved beyond doubt since the publication of the three volumes of *Capital*, particularly during the last 75 years. It is therefore no longer possible for bourgeois economists to remain indifferent about Marx. Today they either openly avow hostility or pretend admiration but deliberately distort some of his theories which should be regarded as major contributions to the science of economics. Fault-finding often leads them to uninformed criticisms of Marx as drastically inconsistent, explaining nothing or unnecessarily roundabout. P A Samuelson's recent criticisms reveal such bias¹ and should be squarely met. While J E King's article in the *Social Scientist*² is a good attempt in this direction, one wonders if its conclusions are fully acceptable to those who have some knowledge of Marxian theory.

King holds that Samuelson's criticism of Marx's law of falling rate of profit is completely unassailable. He presents Samuelson's argument as follows: The rate of profit can decline as a result of innovation only if the real wage increases, and Marx was wrong to predict a falling rate of profit with constant real wages. Given a constant real wage, the effect of technical change on the rate of profit operates in the direction opposite to that predicted by Marx. With a constant real wage technical progress will increase the rate of profit; conversely, if the rate of profit remains constant or falls, the real wage must increase.

Samuelson's criticism is a new addition to the series of futile efforts that have been made by a large number of critics since the beginning of the century to dismiss Marx's law of falling tendency of the rate of profit as a mere chimaera. All of them have failed to consider Marx's argument in the light of his general dialectical analysis, forgetting that Marx's methodology of economic analysis consists in isolating from various phenomena the dominant, typical and characteristic element and pressing it to its conceptual limit with a view to identifying the predominant force that

can regulate the basic economic trend. In the law of falling tendency of the rate of profit, Marx concentrated his attention on the fundamental and prevalent aspect of the increase in the organic composition of capital due to technical progress. Samuelson, like most other critics, fails to consider Marx's law of falling rate of profit in the light of his general dialectical analysis.

Marx's entire analysis of the economic law of motion of capitalism was based on a high level of abstraction but he never moved away from the real world. Rather he tried to isolate, for intensive investigation, certain broad aspects of the real world. In elucidating the law of motion of capitalism, technological advance appeared to him as a crucial determining factor.³ Marx deduced his law of falling tendency of the rate of profit from the long-term dynamic trend of capitalism for capital accumulation accompanied by continuous technological changes. In deducing this law, he had to follow the revolutionary effects of technological progress through the economic system as a whole.

Dialectics of Technical Change

Marx's theory of economic evolution shows that there is an inherent tendency of capitalism for capital accumulation. The capitalist accumulates capital with a motive to conquer the world of social wealth. He is also compelled to accumulate due to coercion by forces external to himself in his struggle for existence in a competitive regime. In the struggle for sales and profits the best weapon is to lower the cost of production. "One capitalist", Marx writes,

can drive another from the field and capture his capital only by selling more cheaply. In order to be able to sell more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply, that is, raise the productive power of labour as much as possible. But this productive power of labour is raised, above all, by a greater division of labour, by a more universal introduction and continued improvement of machinery. The greater the labour army among whom labour is divided, the more gigantic the scale on which machinery is introduced, the more does the cost of production proportionately decrease, the more fruitful is labour. Hence, a general rivalry arises among the capitalists to increase the division of labour and machinery and to exploit them on the greatest possible scale.⁴

By a greater division of labour, by the utilization of new machines and their improvement, by more profitable and extensive exploitation of natural forces, the capitalist can find the means of producing with the same amount of labour, (or of accumulated labour) a greater amount of commodities than his competitors. If he puts the price of the commodities produced by him only a small percentage lower than that of his competitors, he can wrest from them at least a part of their sales. However, this privileged position cannot be enjoyed by the capitalist for an indefinite period. The same machines and the same division of labour would soon

be introduced by other competing capitalists on the same or on a larger scale. The utilization of new machines will become so general that the capitalists find themselves in the same position relative to one another as before the initial switch-over to the new technique. At this stage the rivalry among the capitalists will lead to a new cost of production on the basis of which the same game will begin again. There will be more use of machinery and more division of labour. The exploitation of machinery and division of labour will be made on a still larger scale. Marx writes, "We see how in this way the mode of production and the means of production are continually transformed, revolutionized, how the division of labour is necessarily followed by greater division of labour, the application of machinery, work on a larger scale by work on a still larger scale".⁵

Thus capitalist production is a dynamic process in which better machinery and improved techniques are adopted over time. But Samuelson holds that given a constant real wage, capitalists will introduce a new invention if it raises the rate of profit and if it does not, then there will be no incentive to adopt the invention. This may be valid only in the short run. But in the long run, adoption of new technology becomes unavoidable for all the capitalists. If some of the capitalists fail to adopt the new technology, they will lag behind those who have already adopted it. Capitalists with new technology will be more efficient and stronger than those with the old technology. Ultimately the latter will be driven to the wall.

Why Profit Rate Tends to Fall

The foregoing discussion shows the dialectical process which leads to continuous technological changes, a serious omission in Samuelson's criticism casting serious doubts on the internal consistency of Marx's analysis. It is unfortunate that King blindly supports Samuelson's narrow mechanistic approach to Marx's theory of technical change.

With the introduction of better machinery and improved techniques over time, labour becomes more productive and the same number of labourers transform more materials and machinery into commodities than before. Under such circumstances, the proportion of constant capital in total capital rises. Of course, while the variable constituent of the total capital falls relatively to the constant part, it may rise absolutely through time.

In the process of capital accumulation an increase in the quantity of variable capital involves an increase in the demand for labour power. Consequently under the impact of accumulation, there would be a tendency for wages to rise. Marx says:

Under special stimulus to enrichment, such as the opening of new markets, or of new spheres for the outlay of capital in consequence of newly developed social wants, &c., the scale of accumulation may be suddenly extended ... the requirements of accumulating capital may exceed the increase of labour-power or of the number of

labourers; the demand for labourers may exceed the supply, and therefore wages may rise. This must, indeed, ultimately be the case if the conditions supposed above continue. For since in each year more labourers are employed than in its predecessor, sooner or later a point must be reached, at which the requirements of accumulation begin to surpass the customary supply of labour, and, therefore, a rise of wages takes place.⁶

Here the rise in wages means a rise in money wages. This would also mean a rise in real wages if price level remains the same. Marx also points out that real wages may rise even when the money wages remain the same but prices of wage goods fall due to the introduction of new machinery or other reasons.⁷

However, Marx believed that in the long run wages tend to be driven down to subsistence level. Introduction of labour-saving machinery leads to displacement of workers. The displaced workers fill the reserve army of labour. Machines take the place of skilled labour and those workers who are fortunate enough to be employed are nonetheless in constant competition with the unemployed for jobs. Through this competition, the capitalists, who, in introducing machinery are merely attempting to economize on their wage bills, are enabled to reduce wages to a near starvation level and thus squeeze more and more surplus value, which is essential to the existence of capitalism as it constitutes the income of the capitalist and furnishes the determining incentive of capitalist production.

Counteractive Influences Not Decisive

From the foregoing discussion it appears that the continued existence of capitalist production depends mainly on the technological innovations leading to the introduction of new labour-saving techniques. This means a continuous growth in the expenditures of capitalists on machinery at the expense of labour. In other words, the organic composition of capital displays a steadily rising trend. From this trend Marx deduced that the rate of profit tends to fall in the course of capitalist development.

Marx believed that there are some counteracting influences at work, which thwart and annul the effect of the general law of falling rate of profit.⁸ He had in his mind some other counteracting causes, which he discussed in different chapters of the third volume of *Capital*, but he did not categorically mention them as counteracting influences.⁹ The combined effect of all these forces may often check the falling tendency of the rate of profit or even raise it over a considerable period. Nevertheless, as Marx believed, the counteracting causes cannot continuously exercise their upward influences on the rate of profit and falling tendency cannot be averted for ever. Marx might have thought along these lines because he considered the falling tendency of the rate of profit as a reflection of certain immanent barriers of capitalist production. The counteracting forces seek

continually to overcome these barriers. Most of these forces operate through cheapening the element of constant capital and variable capital and economizing on their use, and are broadly incorporated in Marx's assumption of continuous technological progress which raises the organic composition of capital. Thus the process of continuous technological progress gives rise to tendencies and counter-tendencies, the conflicts of which do not allow the capitalist mode of production to permanently overcome its immanent barriers. Sometimes these barriers are placed on a more formidable scale and in the long run the falling tendency of the rate of profit would prevail over the counter-tendencies.

Critics of Marx's law usually consider the falling rate of profit as a historical forecast and contend that Marx was wrong in predicting a continuous decline in the rate of profit. They do not attribute much importance to the fourteenth chapter of the third volume of *Capital* in which the counteracting influences or the falling rate of profit are discussed and consequently fail to realize that in speaking of the "tendency of the rate of profit to fall" Marx spoke of this as no more than a tendency.¹⁰ This failure obviously stems from a superficial study of Marx. The first section of King's paper also reflects his superficial understanding of Marx's law of falling rate of profit.

Organic Composition of Capital

We do not intend to pronounce the same judgment on Samuelson's criticism of Marx. Nobody would say that his knowledge of Marx is superficial but it has to be pointed out that Samuelson has a deliberate tendency to underestimate what Marx had done for the science of economics.¹¹ Therefore, it is not surprising that he would try to dismiss the law of falling rate of profit as a chimaera by focusing attention only on Marx's assumption of constant real wages in isolation from the dialectical process that determines the tendencies of capitalist development. Marx never predicted that real wages would always remain stagnant or tend to fall. He clearly recognized that real wages would tend to rise under special circumstances. As already mentioned, when money wages remain the same but prices of wage goods fall due to reduction in the cost of production, through the introduction of new machinery, real wages would rise. Extension of foreign trade may also partly cheapen the necessities of life for which the variable capital is exchanged. This has two effects. If the number of workers and their money wages remain the same, real wages would rise. On the other hand, if the cheapening of the necessities of life reduce the total wage bill the rate of surplusvalue would be raised. However, as King correctly points out, Marx anticipated no substantial or sustained increase in real wages over a long period. But it matters little whether the real wages remain stagnant, fall or rise because the movement of real wages cannot emerge in the final analysis as a determinant of the secular trend of the rate of profit. The predominating force which finally determines the movement of the rate of profit is the movement of the organic composition of capital. King

has completely missed this point.

King feels that the "practical relevance of Samuelson's criticism is probably greatest in underdeveloped countries, where the industrial reserve army may well be strong enough to maintain a subsistence wage level". Here one would expect technical progress to result in an increasing rate of profit. King surmises that this may have been the effect of the 'green revolution' in Indian agriculture. But the so called 'green revolution' is only a recent development in Indian agriculture.

Lacunae in Agricultural Statistics

The technological changes in Indian agriculture during the last ten years or so, that have resulted in the green revolution, may have increased the rate of profit of those farmers who have been able to adopt the new technology but there is no evidence that the rate of profit in the farms operated with old technology has increased (or at least remained constant). Rather there are reasons to believe that a majority of the farmers who operate with old technology cannot produce above the subsistence level. If we consider this as an indicator of falling rate of profit, then it is hardly possible to conclude that the effect of the green revolution has been to increase the average rate of profit in Indian agriculture. Nevertheless, if we accept for argument's sake that the average rate of profit has increased during the green revolution, nobody can *a priori* say that it will continue to increase in the long run. Moreover in the absence of statistical data that correspond to the Marxist categories, namely, constant capital, variable capital and surplus value, the organic composition of capital, the rate of surplus value and the rate of profit in Indian agriculture cannot be calculated. Therefore, it would be completely unwarranted to draw any inference on the validity of Marx's law of falling rate of profit on the basis of statistical data that do not correspond to the Marxist categories.

King might have drawn a completely different inference on the validity of the law if he could have examined the data presented in the annual reports of the Census of Manufacturing Industries (CMI) and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) relating to Indian manufacturing industries. The value of materials, fuels, electricity, lubricants and other inputs purchased and consumed in the manufacture of products and byproducts, work done by other concerns and the allowance for depreciation of plant and equipment presented in CMI and ASI reports roughly correspond to the constant capital. The variable capital roughly corresponds to all payments made in cash to production workers, as compensation for work done during the year. The surplus value can be obtained by subtracting the sum of constant capital and variable capital from the sum of ex-factory value of products and byproducts exclusive of any incidental expenditure on sales and adjusted for difference in stocks of semi-finished goods at the beginning and at the end of the year and the work done for customers on payment. On the basis of these data one can compute the organic composition of capital (k), the rate of surplus value (e) and the rate of profit (r).

Experience of Indian Manufacturing Industry

The CMI was started in 1946 and was subsequently replaced by the ASI in 1959. The CMI had been confined to only 29 industries while the coverage of the ASI extends to the entire industrial sector. Therefore, on the basis of the entire industrial sector it is not possible to calculate the ratio k , e , and r for the years for which the CMI and ASI reports are available. A careful examination would show that there are only 21 industries which are common to both CMI and ASI. A cursory examination of the trends of the ratios, k , e and r computed on the basis of the aggregates of constant capital, variable capital and surplus value of the 21 industries, shows that k displays a fairly persistent tendency to rise, e displays neither a rising nor a declining trend while r shows a falling tendency over the 20 years from 1946 to 1965. During this period labour productivity increased steadily. A study on labour productivity and real wages shows that the index of gross labour productivity per worker rose by 83 per cent during the period 1950-66. This reflects a rise of 320 per cent in gross ex-factory output at constant prices.¹² Undoubtedly the rise in gross labour productivity per worker was largely due to the effect of technological changes. A preliminary investigation by Shanmukham and Santhanam¹³ shows that significant changes in technology took place in Indian economy during the first two plan periods. There are also reasons to believe that further technological changes took place during the Third Plan period. It is also a known fact that during 1946-65, the reserve army of labour increased greatly. In spite of this the average rate of surplus value did not register any tendency to rise during 1946-1965. During this period the index of real wages recorded several variations. It rose from 100 in 1950 to 127 in 1955 and came down to 107 by 1966. It appears that at least for the Indian manufacturing industries, the movement of the real wages is to a great extent independent of that of the gross labour productivity per worker.¹⁴ Thus one can easily come to the conclusion that Samuelson's criticism against Marx's law of falling rate of profit has no practical relevance so far as the Indian manufacturing industries are concerned and probably there was nothing wrong with Marx's analyses of technological change and the role of the reserve army of labour.

In section II of his paper, King exclusively deals with Samuelson's criticism against Marx on the problem of transformation of values into prices of production. He correctly points out that Samuelson's criticism is "not really a criticism at all". He has tried to bring out the logical inconsistency in the arguments. Unfortunately, in this section, he has not discussed the purpose of Marx's transformation analysis. Consequently if a reader, interested only in the transformation analysis, confines himself to reading this section and does not go through section III, he may be led to believe that Marx was actually searching for a way to translate the deductively discovered values into the price relations arrived at through the market mechanism. However this confusion may

be somewhat eliminated if he goes through section III where King focuses attention on the significance of transformation analysis as well as the qualitative significance of the labour theory of value. In spite of this it does not make clear that Marx's interest in the transformation analysis as a sequel to his labour theory of value was not to show how prices could be deduced from values.¹⁵ This point requires some elucidation which seems to be lacking in King's discussion.

The goal Marx set for himself in *Capital* was "to lay bare" the laws of motion of the capitalist system. For this he had to fulfil the task of analyzing the underlying relations of production, which determine the forms of consumption, distribution and exchange. To Marx, the basic problem of this analysis consisted "precisely in demonstrating how the law of value asserts itself".¹⁶ It was the theory of value by means of which he was able to show how the non-wage incomes are produced and how a social product is distributed between capital and labour.

Value into Price

Under commodity production based on private ownership of the means of production the law of value is the spontaneous regulator of social production, operating through the market mechanism. Value is the basis of the prices of commodities. But

Marx knew perfectly well that price determination can be explained in terms of the competitive process by itself."¹⁷ Prices are an observable phenomenon in a competitive capitalist economy while values are not. "Values are in fact an abstraction from capitalist reality, not an observable phenomenon... The justification for such abstractions... is that they reveal the essence of capitalist reality as opposed to the appearance—an argument which orthodox economics of course is totally unable to comprehend."¹⁸

For Marx, price relations are only the surface manifestations of the social class relations which appear as "economic" relations under the capitalist system of production. Paul Mattick rightly points out that when Marx considered prices, he did so not because he had a real interest in relative prices and their ever-changing interdependencies, but because he was interested in showing that the existence of market prices would not invalidate a value analysis of capitalism.¹⁹

Here again, we are confronted with the question of Marx's particular economic method. On the basis of this method, the transformation of values into prices must be regarded as a historical as well as a logical process. As Meek points out, in this process of transformation

we are really reproducing in our minds, in logical and simplified form, a process which has actually happened in history. Marx began with the assumption that goods sold 'at their values' under capitalism (so that profit rates in the various branches of production were often very different), not only because this appeared to be the proper starting point from the logical point of view but also because he believed that

it had 'originally' been so. He proceeded on this basis to transform values into prices, not only because this course appeared to be logically necessary but also because he believed that history itself had effected such a transformation.²⁰

Unfortunately Marx discussed the historical aspects of the problem of the transformation of values into prices very briefly.²¹ Consequently many problems remained unsolved. As Meek points out, many critics have taken full advantage of this weakness.²² They forget that Marx left the third volume of *Capital* in an unfinished stage. Engels points out that if Marx could have the opportunity to go over the third volume once more he would doubtless have extended the discussion on the historical aspects of the transformation problem.²³

Heart of the Transformation Process

In spite of being very brief, this discussion shows that Marx's logical transformation of values into prices is nothing but the mirror-image of some actual historical transformation in abstract and theoretically consistent form—a correct mirror-image but corrected according to laws furnished by the real course of history itself. Starting with the

determination of value by labour-time, the whole of commodity-production developed, and with it the multifarious relations in which the various aspects of the law of value assert themselves, as described in the first part of Volume I of *Capital*; that is, in particular, the conditions under which labour alone is value-creating. These are conditions which assert themselves without entering the consciousness of the participants and can themselves be abstracted from daily practice only through laborious theoretical investigation; which act, therefore, like natural laws, as Marx proved to follow necessarily from the nature of commodity production. The most important and most incisive advance was the transition to metallic money, the consequence of which, however, was that the determination of value by labour-time was no longer visible upon the surface of commodity exchange. From the practical point of view, money became the decisive measure of value. . . in the popular mind money began to represent absolute value.²⁴

When Marx made the assumption that commodities are sold at their value, he did not mean that prices would approximate values. He clearly recognized that prices deviate from values but he maintained that "value is the centre of gravity around which...prices fluctuate and their continued rises and drops tend to equalize."²⁵ Therefore, it seems that a subsidiary purpose of the transformation calculation was to determine the nature of the deviations between values and process. "But this objective and, indeed, any explanation of pricing as an end in itself, was of very little consequence to Marx, for the primary transformation was not from values into prices but, as Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasize, from surplus values into the non-labour income categories".²⁶ Thus the conversion of

society's surplus value into profit, interest, and rent may be considered as the heart of the transformation process. It takes place via the competitive process which assigns to each industry for profit, interest payment and rent an amount strictly proportionate to its capital investment.²⁷ Can we comprehend such a transformation within a static model of price relations? Samuelson's attempt to answer the question with the aid of an eraser only shows his inability to interpret Marx correctly.

SUHAS CHATTOPADHYAY

- ¹ P A Samuelson, "The 'Transformation' from Marxian 'Values' to competitive 'Prices': A Process of Rejection and Replacement", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Vol. 67, Part 1, September 1970, pp 423-5; "Understanding the Marxian Notion of Exploitation: a Summary of the So-called Transformation Problem between Marxian Values and Competitive Prices", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol IX, June 1971, pp 399-431; "The Economics of Marx: An Ecumenical Reply", *ibid.*, Vol X, March 1972, pp 51-7; Samuelson's "Reply on Marxian Matters", *ibid.*, Vol XI, March 1973, pp 64-8; "Insight and Detour in the Theory of Exploitation: a Reply to Baumol," *ibid.*, Vol XII, March 1974, pp 51-62; "Karl Marx as a Mathematical Economist", in G Horwich and P A Samuelson (Eds.), *Trade, Stability and Macroeconomics: Essays in Honor of Lloyd Metzler*, New York 1974, pp 269-307.
- ² J E King, "Professor Samuelson's 'Marx Kritik', *Social Scientist* 33, April 1975, pp 1-13.
- ³ R L Meek, "Karl Marx's Economic Method", *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays*, Chapman and Hall, 1967, p 107.
- ⁴ Karl Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital", *Selected Works*, Moscow 1969-70, Vol I, p 168.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 168-70.
- ⁶ *Capital*, Vol I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p 613.
- ⁷ Marx, "Wage Labour and Capital", *Selected Works*, Vol I, p 164.
- ⁸ *Capital*, Vol III, Progress Publishers, p 227.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapters IV, V, XVI, XVII.
- ¹⁰ Dobb, Meek and Konus contribute to the understanding that the law must be looked upon as no more than a tendency. See Maurice Dobb, *Capitalism Yesterday and Today* P H Bombay 1959, p 45 and *Political Economy and Capitalism*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1960, p 110; R L Meek, "Falling Rate of Profit", *Science and Society*, Vol XXIV, 1960, Sec. III; A A Konus, "On the Tendency for the Rate of Profit to Fall", *Socialism, Capitalism and Economic Growth*, C H Feinstein (Ed.), Cambridge 1967, pp 72-3.
- ¹¹ P A Samuelson, "Wage and Interest: Marxian Economic Model", *American Economic Review*, Vol XLVII, December 1957, p 884 and also "Marxian Economics as Economics", *American Economic Review*, Vol LVII, May 1967, p 616.
- ¹² *Quarterly Economic Report of the Indian Institute of Public Opinion*, Vol XVI, No 1, July 1969.
- ¹³ P S Shanmukham and K V Santhanam, "Technological Changes in the Indian Economy, 1953-54 to 1964-65" presented at the Third Input-Output Seminar, Bombay, September 1970.
- ¹⁴ Due to limited scope, the present writer refrains from giving the details of the statistical test of the law on the basis of Indian manufacturing data. However, he contemplates to make, in the near future, a detailed study on the behaviour of the rate of profit.
- ¹⁵ William J Baumol, "The Transformation of Values: What Marx 'Really' Meant (An Interpretation)", *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol XII, March 1974, pp 52-53.
- ¹⁶ "Marx's Letter to Kugelmann" dated 11 July 1868, *Selected Works*, Vol II, pp 418-20.
- ¹⁷ Baumol, *op.cit.*, p 53.

- ¹⁸ Quoted from P M Sweezy's letter in Baumol, *op.cit.*, p 60.
- ¹⁹ Paul Mattick, "Samuelson's 'Transformation' of Marxism into Bourgeois Economics" *Science and Society*, Vol XXXVI, No 3, Fall 1972, p 269.
- ²⁰ R L Meek, "Some Notes on the 'Transformation Problem'", *Economic Journal*, Vol LXVI, March 1956, p 105.
- ²¹ *Capital*, Vol III pp 177-8.
- ²² Meek, *op.cit.*, in *Economic Journal*, p 105.
- ²³ F Engels, Supplement to *Capital*, Vol III in *Capital*, Vol III, p 896.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 899.
- ²⁵ *Capital*, Vol III, p 178.
- ²⁶ Baumol, *op.cit.*, p 52.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p 53.

BOOK REVIEW

Review Article

Long Before Pakistan and Bangladesh

AMALENDU DE, *ROOTS OF SEPARATISM IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL*, Ratna Prakasan, Calcutta, 1974, pp 190.

THIS book is an attempt at explaining the origins of Muslim separatism in Bengal. Though the separatist politics in Bengal became increasingly manifest in the first few decades of the twentieth century, its roots developed in the nineteenth. In fact the book scarcely deals with anything that occurred in the twentieth century.

The main argument of the book is that the growth of Muslim separatism cannot be adequately explained in terms of the British policy of 'divide and rule' alone; certain developments in Bengali society since the establishment of British rule led the Muslims increasingly to feel a distinct identity of their own, their present position and future destiny being different from those of the Hindus. The argument is not entirely a novel one.¹ What makes the book a notable contribution to our understanding of Muslim separatism is the emphasis on the distinctiveness of the problem of separatism in Bengal, and the abundance of new data which the author has used.²

The growth of Muslim separatism, it is argued, primarily related to the "rapid economic impoverishment" during British rule of several Muslim groups. British revenue sale laws spelt ruination for the big Muslim *zamindars*. A larger number of petty landholders were wiped out as a result of the resumption of rent-free tenures, which vastly increased after 1828. Under the new agrarian system that gradually evolved in Bengal since the time of the Permanent Settlement of 1793, the economic position of the peasants, among whom Muslims constituted the most numerous group, sharply deteriorated. A considerable number of Muslims previously employed in the army, administration and judiciary lost their jobs. The substitution of English for Persian in 1837 was particularly disastrous for the Muslims, since, for various reasons, they were slow to learn the new official language

with the result that they were quickly replaced by the more adaptable Hindus in the courts and several branches of the civil service.

The author, except occasionally, has not carefully analyzed how this alleged impoverishment of the Muslims necessarily produced separatist feelings. He stresses the factor of religious composition of the zamindars and the peasantry. While the zamindars were mostly Hindus the peasants were predominantly Muslims. An analysis of the land system of Bengal leads to the conclusion that "the feeling of separatism was founded on a solid ground . . . As most of the zamindars of east Bengal were upper caste Hindus and most of the cultivators were Muslims and Namasudras, the relations of landlords and tenants easily got a communal or caste complexion". As regards the role of the other developments, the main suggestion seems to be that in the context of the increasing material success of the Hindus, the Muslims were becoming increasingly conscious of their backwardness, and consequently of the separateness of their economic interests. This gradually led very many Muslims to feel that the politics of the Hindus, as evident in the activities of the Indian National Congress, might not do them any good.

Inequality

Reform and 'thought' movements of various types among the Muslims strengthened the separatist feelings which a specific economic situation thus tended to produce. The *Wahhabi* and *Faraizi* movements, initially insisting on the restoration of the pristine purity of Islam and the removal of un-Islamic influences, and gradually developing (under the leadership of the Faraizis) a distinct economic programme of resisting the tyrannies of zamindars and indigo planters, constituted a distinct type.⁸ The separatist implications of these movements, as noted later, were only indirect, though they undoubtedly "inspired the Muslims of rural Bengal with new ideas", and "helped much to remove the depression in which the Muslims had fallen, especially in political and economic matters".

A second type of movement had far stronger separatist undertones from the very beginning. This stressed the distinctiveness of the racial stock to which the Bengal Muslims belonged, and aimed at demonstrating that they were descendants from immigrant up-country Muslims and not converts from low-caste Hindus, as a widespread view about the origins of the Bengal Muslims had it.

A third type of movement, secular in character and motivation, at least initially, aimed at making the Muslims aware of the supreme benefits of English education, to which the Muslims had largely been indifferent for long. Receiving English education, the leaders of the movement argued, would on the one hand open up before the Muslims employment opportunities of various kinds, and would on the other go a long way towards breaking the hold of obscurantist *Ulemas* on the Muslim masses of Bengal, thus making them more adaptable to changes and eager for innovations. However, with time "far from contributing to secular

nationalism, English education stimulated the Muslim sense of having been left behind in the race for jobs and political influence by the Hindus".⁴

The stress on the separate identity of the Muslims tended to be increasingly pronounced with the spread of nationalist ideas, particularly with the growth of the 'extremist' phase of Congress politics, of which the assertion of the glory of Hindu religion formed a cardinal belief. The 'extremists', reacting against the 'rootlessness' of the Moderates and rejecting their bias in favour of the western model of modernization, searched for an indigenous model, and found it in ancient Hindu religion and philosophy. The criticism of alien political rule thus led to the rejection of the political and the general philosophical values of the West. The idioms of the indigenous religion, the extremists also found, were more intelligible to the common masses. The mixing up of nationalist politics and traditional Hinduism naturally alienated very many Muslims, who felt strongly about their religion. (Students of separatist politics should more carefully analyze the reasons why religion came to occupy a central position in the entire world outlook of the Hindu and Muslim leaders, and why any social and national reconstruction was inconceivable to them without religion. By religion the political leaders did often mean more fundamental principles and beliefs than the prevalent usages connected with religion and the obscurantist social practices. However, political leaders scarcely did anything towards the removal of such practices, so that intellectual and ethical notions of religion co-existed with the popular ones, and the differences in the religious and social practices of Hindus and Muslims created at times an impenetrable barrier between the two communities).

Exploitation

When the separatist feelings were thus rapidly spreading, the Muslim leaders found immensely reassuring the findings of the Bengal Censuses, which clearly revealed how the Muslims vastly outnumbered the Hindus in very many districts of Bengal.

The author has emphasized in this connection two other developments in the Bengali society, though their exact role in the growth of Muslim separatism remains unexplained—first, the attitude of the 'Bengal Renaissance' intellectuals to the particular land system of Bengal, and secondly, the attitude of very many educated Hindus towards 'mass education'. The author fails to establish any direct and close relation between the alleged lack of awareness on the part of the renaissance intellectuals about the manifold evils of Bengal's land system and the growth of separatist feelings. It is wrong to argue that the insufficiently critical attitude of the Bengali intelligentsia to the land system of Bengal resulted in strengthening it, which as a consequence adversely affected the numerically dominant Muslim peasants. The relation between the apathy of educated Hindus to 'mass education' and the growth of separatism is also a remote one. It is notable that the lack of progress of 'mass education' through vernacular among the Muslims could be blamed to a far greater extent on

the aversion of the bigoted Ulemas to vernacular education in general.

The stress on the "rapid economic impoverishment" of the Muslims as a crucial development in the growth of separatism may lead one to suppose that the phenomenon was confined to the Muslim community alone, and that before British rule it was the Muslims who occupied the dominant position in the country's economy and administration. The Hindu zamindars suffered as much as the Muslim ones from the enforcement of the British revenue sale laws and the large-scale resumption of rent-free tenures. It seems a wrong view to hold that the process of immiserization of the peasantry, resulting from the enlarged legal and economic powers of zamindars and other changes during British rule happened to the Muslim community alone. While more Muslims perhaps lost jobs in the army and in the departments of land revenue and justice of the British it was the Hindus who suffered most from the decline of crafts and business, since the mercantile and business community included only an insignificant number of local Muslims.

It is not necessarily true that initially the Muslims suffered more and tended to be impoverished more than the Hindus. What happened was that while a considerable number of Hindus succeeded in improving their material position, the Muslims failed. One of the reasons was that the Hindus had much better foundations to build upon since they held the dominant position in the spheres of landholding, general mercantile business, petty trade and rural moneylending, apart from the fact that they occupied a significant position in the Mughal land revenue administration. The degraded state of the Muslims evidently pre-dated British rule.⁵

Exclusiveness

The author also omits to distinguish between different streams of separatist feelings, and to show whether the different streams converged at all, and to assess their individual roles in the collective consciousness of separatism. The Wahhabi and Faraizi movements did create in their followers a sense of pride in being converts to the original teachings of Islam, and to that extent they became aware of their exclusive identity: The result was not necessarily a feeling of separatism in relation to the Hindus *unless* they confronted tyrannical Hindu zamindars who, frightened by the Faraizi doctrine that land and its resources were given by God to the community as a whole and that the zamindars have improperly misappropriated such scarce resources, were eager to check the growth of the Faraizi sect. Moreover apart from the fact that the influence of the Faraizis was confined to some particular regions⁶ they constituted a distinct group even within the Muslim community, a group largely repugnant to those who disagreed with their religious beliefs. The bitterness with the Faraizis did not derive from such doctrinal differences alone. The Muslim zamindars feared the radical economic doctrines of the Faraizis as much as the Hindu zamindars. Very many Ulemas found in the Faraizi teachings and organization a serious threat to their traditional vocations. The fact

that some of the Faraizi leaders showed, during the *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal, pronounced anti-Hindu feelings need not necessarily be related to the first teachings of the Faraizis. In fact their pro-British attitude was also a later development.

Prejudice

The movement aiming at the refutation of the general notion about the origins of the Bengal Muslims also remained a largely elitist one, scarcely affecting the large mass of Muslim peasantry. Recent researches soon knocked away the foundations of the doctrine of 'foreign extraction' of the Bengal Muslims, and the theory of 'purity of blood'. In fact, apart from some upper-class Muslims who sought to keep alive this doctrine, only a small section of affluent peasants took pride in giving themselves the airs of upper Indian Muslim aristocrats, and in carefully distinguishing themselves from the masses.⁷ Language constituted one of the chief barriers to communication between the Ashraf Muslims and the Muslim masses, the former insisting on the adoption of Urdu as the common language of the Muslims and the latter throughout ignoring the plea.

The movement for popularizing English education among the Muslims was also similarly elitist. The separatist implications of the movement have been noted earlier. The beneficiaries of the movement, being naturally eager that the educated Hindus did not monopolize all the available jobs, tended to feel that the agitation by Congress, representing mainly the Hindus would scarcely do them any good, and thus remained largely insulated from the mainstream of nationalist politics. A conflict between this group and the Ulemas and Maulavis, firmly entrenched in villages and dead against any innovation in the system of education that could threaten to undermine their position, was an inevitable one.

It is striking that the educated Muslim elite, mostly an urban group, had scarcely any influence on the agitations of Muslim peasants against Hindu zamindars. The leadership in such agitations, particularly during the *Swadeshi* movement, was provided mainly by the Maulavis and Ulemas, and in some cases by affluent farmers (who understandably resented the claim of zamindars to a share in their increased agricultural income), and also by some educated Muslims in the villages who felt bitter against the local Hindu zamindars who disdainfully rejected their claim to a new social status which they thought English education had given them.⁸ In fact it was the powerful influence of the Ulemas over the masses that partly accounted for the fact that genuine and deep-rooted agrarian discontent, though associated with a long tradition of active peasant resistance, did not lead to the formulation of any philosophy of a radical peasant movement. The attitude of the Ulemas to the complex question of agrarian relations was largely determined by their communal prejudices, and to them the primary evil of the land system was not that it permitted a largely parasitical group of zamindars to appropriate a large agricultural surplus in the form of rent or of unpaid services by peasants, but that the

zamindars were mostly Hindus. They evidently ignored how the affluent Muslim *jotedars* or Muslim zamindars were equally tyrannical to the Muslim peasants.

Imperialism

A study of Muslim separatism remains incomplete if it stops short at merely describing some roots of separatist feelings, and fails to show how such feelings eventually crystallized into a well-defined political faith since the problem of Muslim separatism became a vital social and political issue only after this transformation had taken place. In fact Indian society was ridden with divisive forces other than Muslim separatism. The point needs to be stressed in view of the fact that separatist feelings did not necessarily lead to separatist politics. In Bengal, for instance, despite the existence of separatist feelings, the Muslims, at least initially, did participate in the Swadeshi movement on a considerable scale, though very many of them gradually dissociated themselves from the movement. Here the imperialist policy becomes one of the decisive forces and it is essential to investigate when and at what points the interests of some sections of Muslims tended to converge with those of imperialism.

BINAY BHUSHAN CHAUDHURI

¹ For instance see W W Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (first published in 1871), and W C Smith, *Modern Islam in India, a Social Analysis*, London 1946; also A Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge*, Calcutta 1974, Ch 5; A Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, Cambridge 1971, Ch 7; Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement*, New Delhi 1973, Ch 8; and A Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-1939*, Cambridge 1972, Ch 14, section 3.

² The appendices are particularly valuable.

³ For this see Muin-ud-Din Ahmed Khan, *Fara'idi Movement* (monograph), Karachi 1965.

⁴ S Sarkar. *op. cit.*, p 414.

⁵ "Even in the heyday of Muslim rule most of the well-to-do and literate inhabitants of east Bengal were not Muslims, but Hindus of the higher castes; the imposition of British rule strengthened, and did not create, their hold upon administration and the land", A Seal, *op. cit.*, p 301.

⁶ Muin-ud-Din Khan, "Geography of the Fara'idi Movement" *op. cit.*, Ch 9.

⁷ "For the ashraf of Calcutta, the poor peasants of east Bengal were merely so many statistics computed to point out their own plight". A Seal, *op. cit.*, p 339. For the point that the Muslims, economically and socially, were far from a homogeneous group, and that despite the egalitarian teachings of Islam the Muslim society was in a certain sense ridden with 'castes', see the book reviewed, pp 25-27.

⁸ S Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp 454-55.

Social Scientist

INDEX

TO VOLUME 3: ISSUES 25 TO 36

ECONOMICS

AGRICULTURE

	ISSUE	PAGE
Kumaresh Chakravarty, Political Economy of Food, Part I (A)	34	17
Kumaresh Chakravarty, Political Economy of Food, Part II (A)	35	21
N Krishnaji, State Intervention and Foodgrain Prices (A)	30-31	75

ECONOMIC THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Suhas Chattopadhyay, Marx, Samuelson and King (C)	36	61
J E King, Samuelson's 'Marx-Kritik' (A)	33	3

INDUSTRY

Meena Gupta and M J K Thavaraj, Indian Industrial Policy and Economic Power Concentration (N)	28	56
Meena Gupta, Foreign Monopolies Dominate Indian Drug Industry (N)	36	53
M J K Thavaraj, National Sector Undermines Commanding Heights (N)	35	60

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

A-Article	C-Communication
D-Discussion	N-Note
R-Report	S-Symposium

	ISSUE	PAGE
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS		
V A Gaitonde, Developing Countries in the International Division of Labour (A)	26	3
E M S Namboodiripad, A World without Inflation (A)	30-31	91
B T Ranadive, World Capitalist Crisis (A)	28	3
G V Rao, Transnational Monopolies (N)	34	55
PUBLIC FINANCE		
Suhas Chattopadhyay, Inflation, Stagnation and an Alternative Approach to Planning (A)	29	3
Ashok Mitra, Current Crisis, Planning and Growth (A)	30-31	3
Kahitumohan Mukherji, Informational Basis of Indian Planning (N)	25	46
Prabhat Patnaik, Current Inflation in India (A)	30-31	22
R Radhakrishna and Atul Sarma, Distributional Effects of Current Inflation (A)	30-31	57
M J K Thavaraj, Fiscal Policies and Inflation: The Indian Experience (A)	30-31	43
Third All India Conference of the Indian School of Social Sciences, Economic Crisis in India and the Fifth Five Year Plan (R)	29	61
EDUCATION		
Prakash Karat, Student Movement at Jawaharlal Nehru University (R)	34	47
Bhabesh Moitra, Signposts to New Education (N)	28	65
C P Narayanan, Democratizing Higher Education (N)	26	72
P Mohanan Pillai, Secondary School Teachers (N)	29	52
Rashid Ali Syed, Student Leadership in Lucknow (R)	33	46
HISTORY		
Asghar Ali Engineer, Origin and Development of Islam (A)	33	22
Irfan Habib, Colonialization of the Indian Economy, 1747-1900 (A)	32	23
E M S Namboodiripad, Problems of Indian History (A)	33	14
Kalyan Kumar Sen-Gupta, Bengali Intelligentsia and the Politics of Rent, 1873-1885 (A)	26	27
K Sivathamby, Early South Indian Society and Economy: The Tinai Concept (A)	29	20
N Vanamamalai, State and Religion in the Chola Empire: Taxation for Thanjavur Temple's Music and Dance (A)	27	26
N Vanamamalai, Herostone Worship in Ancient South India (A)	34	40

	ISSUE	PAGE
Conrad Wood, Historical Background of the Moplah Rebellion: Outbreaks, 1836-1919 (A)	25	5
LITERATURE AND ART		
Desabhimani Study Circle, To All Progressive Writers: An Appeal (N)	27	64
R Perialwar, Portrait of Tribal Life in Irula Folklore (R)	27	43
PHILOSOPHY		
T Jayaraman, Marxism and Quantum Mechanics (C)	35	65
Vijayakumar Kannampilly, Marxism and Christianity (C)	27	57
K K Thekedath, Marxism and Quantum Mechanics (A)	25	35
POLITICS		
POLITICAL SCENE: INDIA		
Hari Chand, Class Character of the Indian Constitution (N)	32	54
Georges Kristoffel Lieten, China and the Undivided Com- munist Party of India (A)	36	3
Sharad Patil, Forest Development or Adivasi Oppression in Maharashtra (R)	27	51
N Ram, Sikkim Story: Protection to Absorption (N)	26	57
Ajit Roy, Marxism and India (D)	26	48
Sheo Nath Singh, Attitudes to Political Parties (R)	28	46
L Srikanthiah, Property Rights under the Constitution (N)	33	65
S C Varma, Jaya Prakash Narayan's Politics (A)	35	38
FOREIGN AFFAIRS		
Malcolm Caldwell, Revolutionary Violence in a People's War (A)	36	43
Susantha Goonetilleke, Imperialism and Development Studies in Sri Lanka (N)	30-31	97
Michael T Klare, Indian Ocean and Japan in US Grand Strategy (A)	27	3
POLITICAL THEORY		
Arvind N Das, Three Misconceptions about the State (A)	28	27
Arvind N Das, Theories of State: Aristotle to Marx (N)	32	63
V A Gaitonde, An Answer to the Theory of Convergence (N)	29	38
V A Gaitonde, Mathematical Methods in Analyzing Inter- national Relations (N)	33	54
Bharat Jhunjhunwala, Parliamentary Process as a Sta- bilization Mechanism (N)	30-31	112
N Ram, Studies in the Development of Indian Capital- ism (A)	35	3

	ISSUE	PAGE
G V Rao, Democracy versus Totalitarianism (A)	26	35
PSYCHOLOGY		
S G Varma, Politics of Psychoanalysis (A)	34	3
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY		
C S I R Scientific Workers' Association, Science Policy for National Development (C)	25	54
SOCIOLOGY		
Anil Mahajan, Marxism and Indian Sociology (N)	35	47
Manorama Savur, Sociology of Conflict Theory (A)	36	29
H C Srivastava, Concept of Tradition in Indian Sociological Thought (A)	27	17
S G Varma, Sociology and Sociological Radicalism (A)	32	3
BOOKS REVIEWED		
S Manzoor Alam and Waheeduddin Khan, <i>Metropolitan Hyderabad and Its Environs</i> . By H S Verma	29	89
Bepin Behari, <i>Economic Growth and Technological Change in India</i> . By Narendar Pani	27	72
Amalendu De, <i>Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal</i> . By Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri	36	71
Alfred De Souza, <i>Indian Public Schools: A Sociological Study</i> . By G Ramachandra Raj	30-31	126
Nigel Harris, <i>India-China: Underdevelopment and Revolution</i> . By Mohan Thapmi	32	70
Indian Council of Social Science Research, <i>A Survey of Research in Psychology</i> . By K G Agrawal	34	69
Shriram Maheswari, <i>Indian Administration</i> . By Rama Varma	35	73
Mahamood Mamdani, <i>The Myth of Population Control: Family, Caste and Class in an Indian Village</i> . By Rama Varma	26	76
E M S Namboodiripad, <i>Indian Planning in Crisis</i> . By T G Sankaran	30-31	122
E M S Namboodiripad, <i>Conflicts and Crisis</i> . By K R S Nair	33	72
T Jagannatha Panicker, <i>Crucifixion of the Unborn: Under- populated India</i> . By Rama Varma	26	78
Ranjit Kumar Sau, <i>Indian Economic Growth: Constraints and Prospects</i> . By M K Sukumaran Nair	28	71
A Rahman and K D Sharma (Eds.), <i>Science Policy Studies</i> . By R P	32	75
Yogendra Singh, <i>Old Wine in New Skins: Modernization of Indian Tradition</i> . By Suneet Chopra	28	78
Romesh Thopar (Ed.) <i>Seminar 178, The Monthly Symposium devoted to Marxism and India</i> . By E M S Namboodiripad	25	58

YOUR EYE SIGHT WEAK?

TAKE **ADAMIN** (VITAMIN A & D) REGULARLY

AVAILABLE IN CAPSULE AND LIQUID FORM
PREPARED FROM

KERALA'S VITAMIN RICH SHARK LIVER OIL

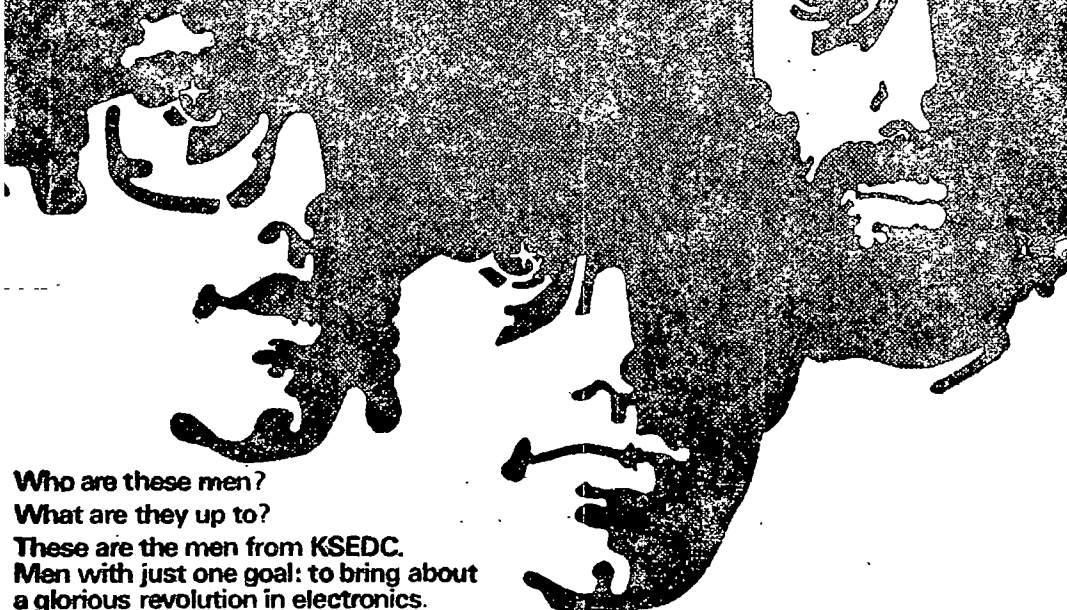
ADAMIN GIVES YOU NATURAL
VITAMINS A & D

ASK YOUR CHEMIST FOR **ADAMIN**

A GENUINE NATURAL PRODUCT
NOT SYNTHETIC

PRODUCED AND } Kerala Soaps & Oils Ltd.
MARKETED BY } Calicut 673005

Right now some men are busy staging a revolution in Kerala



Who are these men?

What are they up to?

These are the men from KSEDC.

**Men with just one goal: to bring about
a glorious revolution in electronics.**

Their triumphs

- On the day of the inauguration they signed an agreement to manufacture 5,000 solid-state TV sets annually for ECIL.
- Five months and fifteen days later, on February 15, 1974, they handed over the first TV set. And had developed: a closed circuit TV system, electronic cash register-pocket and desk calculators, high power static inverters—all within this short time.
- Set up a Central Marketing Organisation to market not only their own products, but also those of associate and outside companies — provided these match technical specifications and quality standards laid down by the Corporation
- And were ready to go into production with Thyristorised DC drives, uninterruptable power supply systems, static relays for power system applications, DC magnetisers, cine projectors speakers and custom-built electronic systems.

Their future programme

This includes the manufacture of:

- 27 million Electrolytic and Monolithic Capacitors in collaboration with Sprague Electromag of Belgium.
- 20 million Ceramic Capacitors in collaboration with the National Research Development Corporation.
- Piezo-electric Crystals, developed with their own know-how, by July 1975

Their objectives

- To accelerate the growth of the electronics industry by designing and manufacturing application-

intensive, electronic equipment and systems.

- To offer technical, financial and marketing support to enterprising entrepreneurs, who will contribute further to the overall growth of the electronics industry

Their platform

The rapid progress, made by KSEDC, is a direct result of its policy of appointing technical persons in key positions, Right from the policy-making to the shop-floor levels. And it is this far-sighted policy that will help them achieve their objectives.

**Kerala State Electronics
Development Corporation Limited—
spearheading the revolution in electronics**

KEKELTRON

Social Scientist

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The August number, which marks the fourth year of the *Social Scientist's* publication, deals with the

NATIONAL QUESTION IN INDIA.

Analysts who have made a close study of the problem in different parts of the country will contribute to the discussion.

Subscribers who have paid up to August and later will get their copy by post. Over the counter, you can get it at the single copy price of Rs 3. No extra charge. If however you want it by registered post, send us Rs 4.50 to cover postal expenses.

When your subscription expires, renew it promptly so that you miss no copy. In it may be something you have been wanting for a long time to read about.

Business Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1
K e r a l a

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 5 DECEMBER 1974

Inflation, stagnation and an alternative approach to planning: *Suhas Chattopadhyay*; Early South Indian society and economy - The Tinai concept: *K Sivathamby*; Report on economic crisis and the fifth five year plan; Notes on: Theory of convergence; Secondary school teachers.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6/7 JANUARY/

FEBRUARY 1975. Current crisis, planning and growth: *Ashok Mitra*; Current inflation in India: *Prabhat Patnaik*; Fiscal policies and inflation: *M J K Thavaraj*; Distributional effects of inflation: *R Radhakrishna* and *Atul Sarma*; State intervention and foodgrain prices: *N Krishnaji*; A world without inflation: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Notes on: Development studies in Sri Lanka; Parliamentary process.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 8 MARCH 1975

Sociology and sociological radicalism: *S C Varma*; Colonialization of the Indian economy, 1757-1900: *Irfan Habib*; Class character of the Indian Constitution: *Hari Chand*; Theories of state, Aristotle to Marx: *Arvind N Das*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 9 APRIL 1975

Samuelson's Marx-kritik: *J E King*; Problems of Indian history: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Origin and development of Islam: *Asghar Ali Engineer*; Student leadership in Lucknow: *Rashid Ali Syed*; Notes on: Mathematical methods in international relations analysis; Property rights under the Constitution.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10 MAY 1975

Politics of psychoanalysis: *S C Varma*; Political economy of food, Part I: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Herostone worship in ancient south India: *N Vanamamalai*; Student movement at JNU: *Prakash Karat*; Note on transnational monopolies.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 11 JUNE 1975

Studies in the development of Indian capitalism: *N Ram*; Political economy of food, Part II: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Jaya Prakash Narayan's politics: *S C Varma*; Notes on: Marxism and Indian sociology; The national sector and commanding heights; Communication on Marxism and quantum mechanics.

Social Scientist

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN INDIA

AUGUST

1975

37

Theoretical Aspects □ Emergence of Nationalities □ India and Pre-revolutionary Russia □ Class Character of the Nationalist Movement □ Regional Development of North-east India □ Rise and Growth of the Bengali Nationalist Movement

SPECIAL NUMBER

Social Scientist

Editor
Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor
Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation
SOCIAL SCIENTIST
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11
Air Mail : Annual \$ 17

(In Pound Sterling)

Sea Mail : Annual £ 4.50
Air Mail : Annual £ 6.00

Single Copy Rs 3

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 4 AUGUST
NUMBER 1 1975

CONTENTS

Prakash Karat	5	Theoretical Aspects of the National Question
Irfan Habib	14	Emergence of Nationalities
Ajit Roy	21	National Problems in India and Pre-revolutionary Russia
E M S Namboodiripad	33	Class Character of the Nationalist Movement
Shibani Kinkar Chaube		
Sunil Munsri	40	Regional Development and the National Question in North-east India
Amalendu Guha		
Partha Chatterjee	67	Bengal: Rise and Growth of a Nationality

Articles express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

PARTHA CHATTERJEE is Fellow, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

SHIBANI KINKAR CHAUBE is Fellow, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

AMALENDU GUHA is professor of economic history, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

IRFAN HABIB is professor in history at the Centre of Advanced Study, Aligarh Muslim University.

PRAKASH KARAT, president of the Students' Federation of India, is a research scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

SUNIL MUNSI is at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD is member of the Polit Bureau, Communist Party of India (Marxist).

AJIT ROY is editor of MARXIST REVIEW, Calcutta.

FROM THE EDITOR

AS THE *Social Scientist* enters its fourth year, we thank all those responsible for its rise and growth, including readers, contributors, critics, distributors and advertisers, for steadfast cooperation. Last year, reluctantly but inevitably, we were obliged by the inflation of all our costs—paper, printing, postage and overheads—to increase the price. It is heartening that in spite of it, the circle of readership has expanded, as manifested in the growing list of subscribers both from home and abroad.

We have done our best to fulfil the promise on thematic numbers. There was a heavy demand for the special issue on 'Inflationary Crisis'. Paper and printing charges have unfortunately set limits on the present issue on the 'National Question'. In November 1975 there will be a special issue on 'Women.' Further on, we are planning the combined number for January-February 1976 to deal with the progressive trends in the literatures of the major Indian languages.

It is a great pleasure to note that there is a steady stream of articles, notes, communications and book reviews on various historical and

current subjects. The largest number of contributions have come from young scholars more of whom are realizing the need for analyzing the problems of our society in a scientific, socialist perspective. *Social Scientist* will continue to provide full support and cooperation to our young contributors.

As always, we will encourage studies and analyses in social sciences with the aid of scientific tools. Contents of any issue of the *Social Scientist* will give you an idea of what kind of material is generally suitable for this journal. Research papers, notes and reports on current affairs, communications and book reviews, typed if possible with wide margins and double spacing, may be sent to the editor for consideration. When you write, see that all quotations are checked and complete references supplied. We shall make alterations only to make the presentation clear and brief. No changes or deletions involving matters of substance will be made without consulting the authors.

PRAKASH KARAT

Theoretical Aspects of the National Question

MARXISM-LENINISM has provided a scientific basis for the study of the nation, treating it as a historical category emerging at a certain stage of social development. The emergence of nation-states since the eighteenth century has been the result of certain concrete forces working in society. In societies where the mode of production was feudal, the growth of commercial and trading elements crystallized into a new class, the bourgeoisie. Capitalism to develop had to destroy the old feudal order and its political system of conglomerate nationalities, languages and dialects. The new economic forms of production required a homogeneous market, unified political territory and a common language as an easy means of communication and intercourse. That is why in the period of rising capitalism, a national movement led by the bourgeoisie attacked feudalism, championed the national language and demanded independence, both political and economic, vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie or ruling class of a colonizing-oppressor nation.

As Stalin authoritatively defined in his *Marxism and the National Question*: "A nation is a historically evolved stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture".¹ A nationality or group of nationalities developed into a nation with the onset of the development of capitalism, the

bourgeoisie completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution. A nationality in the light of the above definition of the nation can be defined as a historical community with its own language, territory, common culture and rudimentary economic ties. The crucial factor of development of stable economic ties and a national market which enables a nationality to develop into a nation depends on its ability to overcome the fetters of precapitalist relations which hinder the formation of the material preconditions for nationhood. This was the pattern of the emergence of the nation-state in Europe.

In the colonized countries under the impact of imperialism, the societies concerned were drawn into the capitalist network, and the resultant class formations and the development of the nation in its various characteristics are linked to the fight for national liberation, completion of the democratic revolution, particularly the anti-feudal tasks. The problems of formation and development of nationalities in conditions of imperialism are part of the strategic question of national liberation and the world proletarian revolution. It must be remembered however that unlike the historical experience of Europe, where nation-states emerged and the bourgeoisie struggled for national independence in the period of rising capitalism, the struggle of the colonized countries for nationhood with a role for the indigenous bourgeoisie in it takes place in the background of worldwide capitalism at its moribund stage, imperialism. Also, socialism has become, at this stage, the decisive force in the world correlation of forces.

Revolutionary Movement

Very important theoretical and political perspectives open out because of this new historical epoch, in which the working class and the revolutionary movement have to play a decisive part in national liberation. Lenin took upon himself to analyze this task in his thesis on the national and colonial question at the second congress of the Communist International. Therefore, in a country like India which has been a colony of British imperialism and which had to fight for independence, the national question is inextricably bound up with the strategic programme of the revolutionary movement.

In the era of imperialism, historical experience has shown that where the democratic revolution has been completed under the leadership of the working class, the national question has been solved as part and parcel of the completion of the democratic tasks of this stage. It is a task incapable of achievement by the indigenous bourgeoisie trying to develop capitalism at this moribund stage, given its compromising attitude to imperialist bourgeoisie. The best examples of this lesson are the Soviet multinational state, and the position of the national minorities in China and Vietnam. On the contrary, we have seen in the twentieth century, the fratricide and bloodshed perpetrated by bourgeois-led regimes which try their own methods of solving the national question, Nigeria and

Pakistan to mention two. The crucial point to note here is that with the advent of the new epoch, the solution of the national question in former colonized countries is a task which the bourgeoisie cannot perform in the classical sense, but can be accomplished only by the leadership of the working class firmly in alliance with the peasantry in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle. The problem of independence for individual nations and the problem of multinationality for multinational states come under this category.

Multinational Contours

In the case of India, the national question is one of the basic problems to be tackled alongside the anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly and anti-feudal tasks of the democratic stage of the Indian revolution. The national question in India has therefore to be concretely studied and its specific characteristics delineated. The Indian Union, since independence, is composed of various nationalities, major and minor, united into a single political state. *The multinationality of India is a historical reality.* It is totally unscientific and a-historical to term India as a nation. There are at least 12 major nationalities clearly demarcated by language, territory and culture. They are Telugu, Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Tamil, Malayalee, Kannadiga, Maharashtrian, Gujarati, Punjabi, Hindi (Hindustani) and Kashmiri. Apart from these there are a host of minority nationalities such as Manipuris, Tripuris, Nagas, Garos and Santhals. There are variations in the degree of nationality formation, dependent on their respective class formations within the major nationalities themselves. But all these nationalities have certain common patterns of development since the advent of British rule and the development of capitalist relations under colonialism. The multinational problem in India is further complicated by the existence of a number of castes and religious communities within these nationalities. The development of class and nationality formations under capitalism is marked by conflict and interaction between these various caste groups and religious communities, an important feature of our multinational society.

Despite the formation of linguistic states which was reluctantly acceded to by the centre under pressure from the long-drawn-out popular movements, at present the nature of the state structure and the character of the ruling classes with the big bourgeoisie in dominance act as a powerful check to the rights and powers of these nationalities organized into linguistic states. The uneven development of capitalism has led to concentration of industrial development. As the Hazari Report on Industrial Planning and Licensing Policy, 1967, ² points out, most of the monopolist Marwari, Gujarati and Parsi investment is concentrated in the three states of Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madras. Such variations are evident in agricultural development, education and other social development. In the field of language, even after 28 years of independence, the glaring fact remains that there is still no linguistic state which

has been able to completely switch over to the state language in education and administration. In the field of centre-state relations, the central government nullifies any democratic role for the states in the fields of finance, political relations and economic development. It is not the intention of this article to explain the facts concerning the above subjects but to attempt to touch upon some aspects of the class realities which create the national problem in our multinational country.

Pan-Indian Big Bourgeoisie

The specific features of Indian multinationality have to be stressed. There is no single nationality or the dominant ruling class of a group of nationalities oppressing other nationalities in India. The Indian big bourgeoisie—the most important section of the ruling class—is a composite strata derived from various nationalities. According to an analysis made by Ajit Roy of the 75 monopoly houses listed by the Monopoly Inquiry Commission Report, a quarter of the assets of these houses are controlled by Marwaris; the Parsis and Gujaratis together control thirty-seven per cent; the Hindustani houses, just under eight per cent; the South Indian (mainly Tamil), Bengali and Panjabi, between four to six per cent each; Maharashtrians, under one per cent; and foreign houses (all British except one) 13.5 per cent. This indicates a composite character^a. Moreover, one should not overlook the aspect of the interlocking of capital in the corporate sector, in the sense that it is drawn from diverse national sources and also the interlinking of industries of the big bourgeoisie and non-big bourgeoisie through ancillary industries and markets.

Despite the unevenness of capitalist development which is reflected in the variation of the degree of nationality-formation processes amongst the various nationalities, the bourgeoisie of the major Indian nationalities are relatively well developed and the non-big bourgeoisie of these nationalities have degrees of contradiction and collusion with the all-India ruling classes. While the dominant sections of the Indian bourgeoisie is multinational, this does not preclude tension and conflict, firstly between the big bourgeoisie and the non-big bourgeoisie of different nationalities and secondly amongst the non-big bourgeoisie of different nationalities themselves.

In fact the pattern seems to be that control lies with the dominant all-India big bourgeoisie with degrees of contradiction and collusion with the nationality-based non-big bourgeoisie. This is inherent in the laws of capitalist development and its built-in unevenness. Therefore we see the resultant inequalities in socio-political development also. The model in India is more of a pan-Indian ruling class making joint efforts to exploit and utilize the resources of all nationalities along with the local bourgeoisie and sharing the benefits—a disproportionate share going to the big fish. The term 'national bourgeoisie' which is commonly used to characterize the whole Indian bourgeoisie (often in an indiscriminate manner) must therefore be taken to mean a class which includes an all-India big

strata drawn from various nationalities and secondly the regional-and nationality-based strata of the medium and small variety. If this reality is grasped much of the conflicts arising from the national question can be correctly understood.

Landlordism, Army and Bureaucracy

The holdings of landlords are generally confined within their own nationality boundaries except in border areas. This is also unlike the "national oppression" model which was extant in tsarist Russia as we shall see later. There is no landlordism in India based on the landlord class of one nationality or group of nationalities oppressing other nationalities. The nationality-based semi-feudal landlords play an important role by providing a base for the big bourgeoisie through their alliance to prop up their class rule and exploitation. In the case of the bureaucracy and the armed forces—important arms of the ruling classes—there is no evidence of any one or group of nationalities monopolizing them. This is evident for instance in statewise I A S recruitment figures as far as the bureaucracy is concerned. In the case of the armed forces, the procedure of selection for officer recruitment through selection boards indicates not nationality preference but class, educational and social qualifications. We have no statewise figures of officer recruitment. Table I shows the number of jawans (soldiers of non-commissioned rank) recruited in 1970-71 with percentage share of each state.

TABLE I

RECRUITMENT OF JAWANS

State	Recruitment in 1970-71	Percentages of Total
1 Andhra	2333	5.5
2 Assam	1038	2.4
3 Bihar	2300	5.4
4 Gujarat	611	1.4
5 Haryana	3780	8.9
6 Kerala	2027	4.8
7 Tamil Nadu	3003	7.0
8 Madhya Pradesh	1335	3.2
9 Maharashtra	3218	7.5
10 Mysore	1631	3.8
11 Orissa	523	1.2
12 Punjab	7363	17.3
13 Rajasthan	3557	8.3
14 Uttar Pradesh	7460	17.5
15 West Bengal	1114	2.6
16 Jammu & Kashmir	1375	3.2
Total	42,668	100.0

Tsarist Russia: Prison House of Nationalities

The only other country where the multinational question assumed such complex forms is the tsarist Russian empire. But there are important differences between the two situations. Tsarist imperialism had colonized a host of minority nationalities and the ruling classes belonging to the Great-Russian nation proceeded to subject these nationalities to colonial and national oppression. As late as 1915, two years before the October Revolution, 18 million hectares of the best land of the Kazakh and the Kirghiz were granted to Russian landlords, government officers and kulaks. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of industrial workers employed in factories and railways amounted to 2.2 million in the Russian provinces as compared to 2.8 million in the whole of the empire, showing the concentration of factories in one nationality. The lesser nationalities were predominantly agrarian, providing agricultural raw material. According to one estimate in 1913, in the five republics of central Asia and in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia a total of 30 primitive machine tools (1.7 per cent of Russia's total) were produced. In all the lesser nationalities, industry was confined to primitive semi-artisan workshops chiefly devoted to processing agricultural raw materials. Moreover, in the field of agriculture, the central Asian region became the main supplier of cotton to the textile industry in the Russian region and agriculture acquired the characteristics of a one-crop system typical of colonialism. Coupled with this economic backwardness was the concomitant social backwardness, thanks to the efforts of the Russian ruling class which suppressed the local languages and culture. This was manifested in the overwhelming illiteracy and backward educational and medical facilities.

In numerical strength, the Russians constituted nearly half the total population of the tsarist empire at the time of the revolution. Therefore, the socialist revolution of 1917 brought about the liberation of nearly a hundred oppressed nationalities from the tsarist yoke and national oppression. The policy of the Bolsheviks and the newly established Soviet power was the voluntary union of all these nationalities with full freedom to develop their respective languages and cultures, run their administration and provide for the right of secession from the socialist republics which constituted the USSR. The Soviet Union today consists of 15 soviet socialist republics. There are also 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous regions and 10 national areas within these union republics. Altogether there are more than a hundred smaller nationalities in the Soviet Union. The spectacular advance made by the various nationalities in the sphere of economy, culture and social relations is a tribute to the Marxist-Leninist approach to the national question pioneered by Lenin and implemented by Stalin and the Communist Party. The above description of the multinational situation in tsarist Russia gives some idea of the differences with India and the line

to be adopted by the working-class movement. But before we come to the working-class stand on the national question in India, it is necessary to mention the bourgeois-landlord approach to the question and also the revisionist distortions in the Indian case.

Bourgeois and Revisionist Positions

E M S Namboodiripad has pertinently pointed out that the genesis of conflict on national problems (along with caste, linguistic and regional conflicts) derives from the fact that with capitalist development in the country, new sections of the bourgeoisie arise from the numerous castes, religious groups and linguistic cultural nationalities. They conflict with the already established groups and in these struggles

the ruling classes belonging to each social and national group try to unite "their own" people against other nationalities and social groups. In thus uniting its own national or social group against the rest, it helps the dominant ruling group at the centre by disrupting the unity of the working people of the whole country against the bourgeois-landlord regime.⁴

The big bourgeoisie, the main hindrance to the democratic development of the nationalities, is totally inimical to the democratic aspirations of the peoples of the various nationalities as its major interest is in an all-India centralized market and the freedom to exploit the raw material and labour of all nationalities. It has therefore no hesitation in riding roughshod over all demands which may threaten its freedom to continue the class exploitation of all the regions of our country. It may be recalled that the All India Manufacturers' Organization and the All India Exporters' Association publicly stated their opposition to the formation of linguistic states; parties of the Right like the Swatantra and Jansangh also opposed the demand.

We therefore find two poles to the bourgeois approach to the national question. At the one end, the monopoly strata and their supports in the bureaucracy are interested in the 'unity of the nation' and use slogans like 'national integration' or 'national language' in order to pursue their narrow class interests which deny the right of every nationality to have equality of opportunity, economic growth and cultural development. At the other end, the developing bourgeois uses linguistic nationality and caste sentiments in their conflicts with the entrenched strata to strengthen their own position by encouraging chauvinism. Both approaches serve the common purpose of dividing the working people of all nationalities.

The Right Communist (CPI) programme characterizes the Indian Union as the Indian nation. From this it is a short step for their theorists to demand Hindi as the official language of the 'nation'. The characterization of India as a 'nation' violates all the basic fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist stand on the national question. Advocates of Hindi as the official language forget Lenin's stand on an obligatory state language for

a multinational country. This of course is linked to their understanding of the 'national democratic front' and sharing power with the 'national bourgeoisie'. By this stand they overlook or underemphasize the pernicious role of the big bourgeoisie dominant at the centre (both in the leadership of the state apparatus and the ruling class) which shows scant respect for the democratic aspirations of the peoples of all nationalities. The revisionists' stand on centre-state relations and on state autonomy has undergone a clear shift and it no more demands autonomy for the states, probably for fear of weakening the Congress government at the centre. It has hardly any words of condemnation for the atrocities of the Indian army in Nagaland and Mizoram and the almost national form of oppression perpetrated on them by the Indian bourgeois-landlord classes. It is today more strident against the so-called fissiparous tendencies which are out to weaken the central government without bothering to analyze and separate the democratic elements in the conflicts which arise out of India's multinational, multilingual and multicaste society. Instead it sings paeans in praise of every act of the central government which tramples on the democratic rights of minority nationalities: the recent absorption of Sikkim was hailed by the CPI. As in every aspect of theory, the CPI stand on the national question (which not surprisingly dittoes the Soviet stand) shows that in this matter too it has obligingly become a willing echo to the big bourgeois calls for 'unitary nation' and national chauvinism.

Working-class Approach

A correct Marxist-Leninist approach to the national question in India cannot fail to distinguish the anti-feudal and democratic content of the demands made by various nationalities in India. Such demands have to be demarcated from the chauvinist ones made by the ruling classes of these nationalities. For instance the struggle to develop and utilize the national languages, the demand for state autonomy, the fight by scheduled castes and tribes and tribal nationalities against social oppression—all these are important components of the struggle against the bourgeois-landlord state. While taking up these demands, the revolutionary movement does not support the chauvinist and separatist demands of the ruling classes who try to utilize the nationality sentiment for their own class interests.

While there is still opposition to the existence of linguistic states, however historically anachronistic such a stand represents, the all-India ruling class has now adopted modified tactics of instigating intra-nationality conflicts and fuelling chauvinistic demands of warring bourgeois groups. The role of big business in nurturing the Shiv Sena in the heart of monopoly capital, Bombay, and the role of the landlords in the separatist Telangana and Jai Andhra agitations are clear indicators. The central government's policy in the sharing of river waters and border disputes helps along such conflicts. Therefore the working-class movement has to adopt a

dialectical approach to the problem posed by India's multinationality. While waging a principled struggle to safeguard the legitimate rights of the nationalities and to defend their rights in the sphere of language and culture, they must conduct an unremitting struggle to foster and safeguard the unity of the working peoples of all nationalities. Since the multinationality in India means the class oppression of all nationalities by the big bourgeois-landlord combine, uniting the working people of all nationalities to fight this common oppression is an urgent task.

The national question has to be used as a class weapon in the interests of the working class and toiling people of all nationalities. Stalin pointed out with reference to Russia: "It is not the national but the agrarian question that decides the fate of progress in Russia. The national question is a subordinate one."¹ The national question in tsarist Russia assumed importance as part of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist tasks of the revolution against tsarism. Similarly in India where semi-feudalism dominates the countryside, the agrarian question is the crux of the democratic revolution. It is in this context and subordinate to it that the national question assumes importance. To unleash the tremendous potential of the millions of peasantry, the agrarian revolution has to take into account their linguistic, cultural and national aspirations. The national question in India therefore can be satisfactorily settled only with the people's democratic revolution. The recomposing of the Indian Union, with a democratic state structure, genuine equality of all Indian languages and free flowering of diverse national cultures, is a historic task possible only with the voluntary union of all the Indian nationalities in a people's democracy.

¹ J V Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question*, Moscow 1912.

² Report of the Industrial Planning and Licensing Policy, 1967.

³ Ajit Roy, "Some Aspects of the National Question in India," *Marxist Review*, Calcutta, October 1967, p 22.

⁴ *People's Democracy*, 7 August 1966.

⁵ J V Stalin, *op. cit.*

IRFAN HABIB

Emergence of Nationalities

THE NATION is often recognized as the central political entity of the modern world. Yet, as happens with terms which have a wide use, exceptions tend to blur the main principles, and a definition of nation acceptable to all is hard to find. Marxists have however generally followed Stalin's well-known definition: "A nation is a historically constituted community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture".¹

There is a traditional scholarly objection to common language being a necessary characteristic of the nation, the example of Switzerland with its three languages (German, French and Italian) being usually cited to show that a nation (in this case, the Swiss nation) might arise in spite of a multiplicity of languages. Yet the Swiss case is unique; and one might say that here the other factors, namely, geography and historical circumstances have been of such overwhelming importance as to override language as a factor altogether. There is no other indisputable case in which people speaking two different developed literary languages have yet formed a nation.

Stalin's definition does, however, contain a crucial omission, an omission which may be supplied by what he himself says about the

relationship between nation and state. A nation not only consists of people sharing a common culture. To be a nation, it is further necessary, in the words of John Stuart Mill writing as early as 1861, that they "desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves, or a portion of themselves, exclusively." Inherent in the concept of the nation is the existence of a popular consciousness of the desirability of a separate entity of that nation as a sovereign state.

It is this last feature that distinguishes a nation of the modern era from all earlier countries and kingdoms which might have contained peoples speaking common languages and sharing common cultures. There was an Arab people at the rise of Islam; and there was at Muhammad's death even a state containing practically all the Arabic-speaking tribes. But there was no Arab nation, because there was no popular urge (expressed in any form whatsoever) for the formation of a separate state containing the Arabs alone.

The 'popular sanction' behind the formation of a nation makes the nation a modern phenomenon, mainly because it is the modern instruments of communications and transport, the printing press, the roads and railways that have enabled a real popular national consciousness to be created.

Rise of Nation-states

It is generally supposed that the earliest nations were represented by the 'nation-states' of Spain, Portugal, France, England and Holland emerging during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. That is, the nations originated, as Stalin puts it, in "the process of the elimination of feudalism and the development of capitalism". But in central and eastern Europe, nations emerged only with the Industrial Revolution. During the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Metternich could get away with calling Italy a mere "geographical expression" and even France was not fully a nation, until the French Revolution of 1789 removed in its flood the multiple local loyalties.

This slow creation of nations until the eighteenth century, and their emergence all over Europe and other parts since the closing years of that century, are not just the results of the corresponding pace of development of the means of communication. The bourgeoisie trying to create domestic markets behind national walls played the crucial role in creating nations. "The market", says Stalin quite aptly, "is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism".

In studying the process of the formation of nations, one must of course expect enormous complexities. There are cases where two allied languages are involved; and there may be a battle for 'popular sanction' between the advocates of a united nation and those of two separate nations. Macedonia, in relation to Bulgaria, offers a striking example of such a situation. Or again, there may be a common culture, but the urge for a

separate sovereign state is either (a) not fulfilled, or (b) is moderated. Such cases are numerous. The Slavic peoples within Austria-Hungary and the republics within USSR, illustrate respectively cases of the types (a) and (b). Such peoples are usually termed 'nationalities', not nations, in Marxist usage.

India, the Nation and Country

From this general view, let us pass on to the specific case of India. There is no doubt that there has been a consciousness of India as a country down the centuries. Partly, this is due to geography—the Himalayas and the western and eastern ranges separating it from the rest of the world. Partly, the Brahmanical culture, with Sanskrit as the lingua franca, has given it a unity in the eyes of the upper strata of society. Fourteenth-century poets like Amir Khusrau and Isami sang of the glories of Hindustan, of its riches, its beauty and culture. Their descriptions leave us in no doubt that they meant by Hindustan the entire subcontinent of India. But it was the anti-imperialist movement, drawing in masses of the Indian people in struggle against British rule, that made loyalty to India supreme over all other territorial loyalties in the popular consciousness.

The partition of 1947 showed that a large section of the Indian people could yet be persuaded in the name of religion to accept the creation of a separate state, Pakistan, carved essentially on religious principles. It may, of course, be mentioned that religion even entered the popular conception of India as a country in that Hinduism was supposed in the eyes of many to provide the basis of its unity.

There can be little doubt too that the Indian big bourgeoisie has been deeply interested in the furtherance of the conception of India as the sole centre of territorial loyalty. The Indian constitution, in spite of its federal garb, is a notoriously unitary constitution.

Is India then a nation?

Marxists must without hesitation answer this question in the negative. India is a country, certainly; but it is not a nation, because it meets the requirement of neither a common language nor a common culture.² It is a country which contains a number of emerging nationalities with different languages and cultures of their own.

Some Marxists write as if the nationalities within India began to emerge even before the British conquests, so that today we ought not to speak of emerging nationalities, but of nationalities that are fully formed already.

The roots of this view lie in the assessment of the stage of development of Indian society on the eve of the British conquests. R P Dutt writes:

The internal wars which racked India in the eighteenth century after the decline of the Mogul Empire represented a period of inner confusion (comparable in some respects to the Wars of the Roses in England and the Thirty Years War in Germany) necessary for the break-up of

the old order and preparing the way in the normal course of evolution, for *the rise of bourgeois power* on the basis of the expanding merchant, shipping and manufacturing interests in Indian society . . . (The British conquests) led to the outcome that the bourgeois rule which supervened in India on the break-up of the old order was not *Indian bourgeois rule*, growing up within the shell of the old order, but foreign bourgeois rule forcibly superimposing itself on the old society and smashing the germs of *the rising Indian bourgeois class*.⁹ (Emphasis added.)

Jawaharlal Nehru put the same view in a still more exaggerated form, saying that during the seventeenth century "India was, in fact, as advanced industrially, commercially and financially as any country prior to the Industrial Revolution."⁴

In other words, India during the period before the British conquests was where western Europe was before the Industrial Revolution. From such a view of the economy of India, with its "germs of the rising Indian bourgeois class", it follows that one should look for political consequences similar to those occurring in western Europe, among them the rise of nationalities.

Linguistic Basis

The facts that Amir Khusrau during the fourteenth century lists the various languages spoken in India, that the religious preachers sang of devotion and worship in regional languages such as Bengali (Chaitanya), Awadhi (Kabir), Braj (Surdas) Panjabi, (Nanak) Marathi (Namdev), and so on, are supposed to prove that the linguistic basis was being furnished for the emergence of nationalities during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Subsequently, the Maratha, Afghan, Jat and Sikh states arose during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and these are seen as political expressions of the emerging national consciousness. Such was the view of the veteran Soviet Indologist, Reisner. Similarly, E M S Namboodiripad dated the formation of the "nation" of Kerala at about this period.⁵ In relation to Shivaji, the belief that he was the creator of the Maratha nation has had its votaries in the ranks of the old nationalists as well as Marxists. P V Ranade, a moderate interpreter of Shivaji, believes that by Shivaji's time conditions had been created "for a common psychological make-up of the Marathi-speaking people".⁶

It is, however, questionable whether the Indian economy before the British conquest contained any "germs" of bourgeois development. Commodity-production ought not to be confused with capitalistic production. Merchant capital grows and flourishes, as Marx pointed out, on the basis of precapitalistic systems without requiring any change in the productive process. The pace of technological development in pre-British India was extremely slow, and of no comparison to what was taking place in Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The manufactory regarded by Marx as representing the last stage before the crucial

shift to 'machinofacture' (factory system), had not been developed in Mughal India. Above all, there was little or no market in the countryside for the products of the towns, which flourished in a parasitical manner upon the distribution of the agricultural surplus, obtained principally in the form of land-revenue by the ruling class.⁷ There was, therefore, neither a bourgeoisie, nor any urge to demarcate separate regions as domestic markets.

The economic basis for the creation of nationalities was thus utterly lacking before the British conquests. The existence of regional languages and the development of some of them into literary languages does not in itself signify the emergence of nationalities. One would then have to date the rise of the Tamil nationality to the Sangam age. Similarly, should the emergence of Persian as a literary language about AD 1000 be taken to mean that Persia was then becoming a nation? Indeed, all literary languages have at some stage been spoken languages, and the development of spoken into literary languages has been occurring throughout history.

To judge whether the emergence of some regional literary languages had any association with a rising national consciousness, one must surely look to the contents of what was being written in those languages. Here, all that we find during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is (besides some secular poetry) simple popular religious preaching, which contains not an iota of any patriotic feeling or regional assertiveness. As we have argued above, it is the popular conscious desire for separate statehood (and not a fortuitous consequence of the rise of a regional kingdom, like the one created by Shivaji, who claimed that he was not a Maratha but a Rajput descended from the Ranas of Mewar) that gives a community of people, with one language and culture, the characteristic of a nation. So long as such conscious striving is not present in any identifiably direct or indirect form, the existence of a nation or nationality cannot be accepted.

To sum up: There was no basis for the emergence of nationalities before the British conquests, because there was no trace of any emerging bourgeoisie. And quite predictably we find no trace of national consciousness in whatever is preserved in the regional literatures of the period.

Economic Basis

The emergence of nationalities in India is thus a phenomenon subsequent to British conquests and one that accompanied the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie, for which British rule created the necessary preconditions. Stalin said of the early phase of the development of the bourgeoisie in India, that "in the case of India too, it will be found that nationalities till now lying dormant, would come to life with the further course of bourgeois development". Just as bourgeois ideology, once formed on the basis of development of bourgeois society in one part of the globe, may anticipate bourgeois development in another; so too in India, it is quite possible that in a case like Bengal, the consciousness of Bengal as a

nationality was the result initially of the implantation of modes of thought from Europe during the earlier part of the nineteenth century. For India as a whole, it would be true to say that the loyalties to regional languages and cultures developed largely with the growth of the bourgeoisie in India during and after the second half of the nineteenth century. The freedom movement played a dual role in relation to the emergence of such regional consciousness. Inasmuch as it relied upon mass support, it could not but give great impetus to the politicization of the content of literatures in regional languages, and it thus laid the foundations for nationality-consciousness. On the other hand, by invoking the greater loyalty to the Indian motherland in a united struggle against British rule, it subjugated the urge of the peoples of the various regions for developing into separate nationalities.

The emerging nationalities in India had no common oppressor-nationality within India, either before 1947 or after.⁸ It is, however, a pertinent question whether, especially after 1947, the rising medium and smaller bourgeoisie have not seen in nationality-slogans (linguistic states, regional reservations, preference for 'sons of the soil') so many protective walls for themselves. The big bourgeoisie, on the other hand, can operate best with a highly centralized apparatus controlling the whole of India. This may explain the official opposition so long offered to the redrawing of the boundaries of British-Indian provinces on linguistic lines.

It does seem, however, that the conflicts between the big bourgeoisie and the other sections of the bourgeoisie have not in the main assumed 'national' forms in India. Even today not only is the nationality-consciousness extremely uneven in different regions; but the nationalities themselves have not generally fully developed.

Against National Oppression

This has a very important bearing on the determination of the attitude of the working class to the national question in India. Marxists have always proceeded from the actual conditions of national consciousness. They are internationalists: they are opposed to oppression of nations; they are, however, themselves not nationalists. They do not themselves seek to create separate nations, where none exists. They wish to bring together as many peoples as possible in united action against class oppression, while ensuring that the emergence of any one nationality as an oppressor behind the facade of unity should be prevented.

It seems, looking at India today, that there is no urge (at the level of serious bourgeois politics) in any major nationality within India to secede. Marxists too are opposed to secessionism. At the same time, both in order to prevent the possibility of national oppression arising in the future and as part of the programme of people's democratic front in which the small and medium bourgeoisie can be won over as an ally against the big bourgeoisie, it is desirable to struggle for the maximum possible powers for the states, representing the different nationalities.⁹

It should be clear, of course, that this attitude applies to Indian nationalities alone. It does not sanction the absorption of any other nationality (for example, Sikkim) into India.

- ¹ J V Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question", *Collected Works*, Moscow 1953, Vol II, p 307.
- ² Cf. "Note on the National Question" adopted by the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), para 4.
- ³ R P Dutt, *India Today*, 1947.
- ⁴ J Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, London 1956, p 282.
- ⁵ E M S Namboodiripad, *The National Question in Kerala*, Bombay 1952, pp 51-58.
- ⁶ Indian Council of Historical Research, *Indian Historical Review*, I, 1, p 47. Cf. E M S Namboodiripad, *op. cit.*, p 59: "The great Shivaji and other *national* heroes were coming out as the champions of a new form of social and state organization—an organization based on *national* language and *national* culture—although many of them were also *national* oppressors in relation to *nationalities* other than their own" (Emphasis added)
- ⁷ I have attempted a detailed examination of the "Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in Mughal India" in *Enquiry* NS Vol III, No 3.
- ⁸ Cf. "Note on the National Question," 9th Congress of CPI (M), para 7.
- ⁹ See "Amended Programme of the CPI(M)", as adopted at the 9th Congress, Section. 88.

AJIT ROY

*National Problems in India and
Pre-revolutionary Russia*

ALTHOUGH FIRMLY wedded to the principle of internationalism Marxists since the time of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have always paid the closest attention to the national question. In this there is nothing paradoxical: at least three fundamental reasons exist for the special importance attached to national problems.

First, no nation, as Karl Marx used to emphasize, can be free that oppresses other nations. In other words, the proletariat of the oppressing nation will find itself handicapped in its fight against its own bourgeoisie as long as the latter continues to draw tributes from other oppressed nations and to utilize the divisions between the toilers of the oppressing and the oppressed nations in the bourgeoisie's own interests.¹

Secondly, lack of democratic and political rights of the oppressed nations "can only serve to retard the free development of the intellectual forces of the proletariat of subject nations"² and, hence acts as a brake on its struggle for self-emancipation as a class.

Thirdly, and above all, national oppression diverts the attention of large strata of the population from social questions, questions of the class struggle, to national questions, questions 'common' to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And this creates a favourable soil for lying propaganda regarding 'harmony of

interests', for glossing over the class interests of the proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers.³

Marxism-Leninism, however, never examines the national question in terms of any absolute criteria, but always in concrete historical terms and as an issue subordinate to the overall problems of the developing class struggle. It is to the interests of this struggle, said Lenin,

that we must *subordinate* the demand for national self-determination. It is this that makes all the difference between our approach to the national question and the bourgeois-democratic approach. The bourgeois democrat (and the present-day socialist opportunist who follows in his footsteps) imagines that democracy eliminates class struggle, and that is why he presents all his political demands in an abstract way, lumped together, 'without reservations', from the standpoint of the interests of the 'whole people', or even from that of an eternal or absolute moral principle. Always and everywhere, the social democrat ruthlessly exposes this bourgeois illusion, whether it finds expression in an abstract idealist philosophy or in an absolute demand for national independence.⁴

Drawing the Line

Lenin repeatedly emphasized that "we must *link* the revolutionary struggle for socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question." The Marxist-Leninist solution of the question must be based on the consistent working out of evolutionary democracy. "The proletariat," said Lenin, "cannot be victorious except through democracy, i. e., by giving full effect to democracy and by linking with each step of its struggle democratic demands formulated in the most resolute terms."⁵

The democratic essence of the Marxist solution of the national question is "the demand for political and civil liberties and complete equality."⁶ This kernel of the Marxist approach to the national question was formulated by Lenin in this manner:

The national programme of working-class democracy is: absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language; the solution of the problem of the political self-determination of nations, that is, their separation as states by completely free, democratic methods; the promulgation of a law for the whole state by virtue of which any measure (rural, urban, or communal, etc., etc.) introducing any privilege of any kind for one of the nations and militating against the equality of nations or the right of a national minority, shall be declared illegal and ineffective, and any citizen of the state shall have the right to demand that such a measure be annulled as unconstitutional, and that those who attempt to put it into effect be punished.⁷

"The awakening of the masses", Lenin explains, "from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation, are progressive. Hence, it is the Marxist's *bounden* duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on

all aspects of the national question.”⁸ But he immediately underlines that “this task is largely a *negative* one. But this is the limit that the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the ‘positive’ activity of the *bourgeoisie* striving to *fortify* nationalism.”⁹

This crucial line between the negative and ‘positive’ aspects, referred to above, of the national question was more sharply drawn by Lenin in the following terms.

Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, *in favour*, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for *its own* bourgeois nationalism, we stand against. We stand against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation.¹⁰

Revolutionary Internationalism

Positively interpreted, the above means that while fighting against the inequalities and injustices imposed by the *oppressing* nation, the toiling sections of the oppressed nation, led by its proletariat, must take utmost care (i) to seek the closest unity with the proletariat and toiling sections of the oppressing nation and (ii) to maintain and strengthen their independence vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie of their own nation. This indeed is the red thread running through the Marxist-Leninist approach to the national question. Lenin underlines it thus:

Working class-democracy contraposes to the nationalist wranglings of the various bourgeois parties over questions of language, etc., the demand for the unconditional unity and complete amalgamation of workers of *all* nationalities in *all* working-class organizations — trade union, cooperative, consumers, educational and all others—in contradistinction to any kind of bourgeois nationalism. Only this type of unity and amalgamation can uphold democracy and defend the interests of the workers against capital—which is already international and becoming more so—and promote the development of mankind towards a new way of life that is alien to all privileges and all exploitation.¹¹

The rationale behind this internationalist-revolutionary position is explained by Lenin:

There are two nations in every modern nation—we say to all nationalist-socialists. There are two national cultures in every national culture. There is the Great-Russian culture of the Purishkeviches, Guchkovs and Struves but there is also the Great-Russian culture of Chernyshevsky and Plekhanov. There are the same two cultures in the Ukraine as there are in Germany, in France, in England, among the Jews; and so forth.¹²

Earlier in the same piece, Lenin had pointed out:

The *elements* of democratic and socialist culture are present, if only in rudimentary form, in *every* national culture, since in *every* nation there are toiling and exploited masses, whose conditions of life inevitably give rise to the ideology of democracy and socialism. But *every* nation also possesses a bourgeois culture (and most nations a reactionary and clerical culture as well) in the form, not merely of 'elements', but of the *dominant* culture.

"In advancing," Lenin continues, "the slogan of international culture of democracy and the world working-class movement, we take from *each* national culture *only* its democratic and socialist element; we take them *only* and *absolutely* in opposition to the bourgeois culture and the bourgeois nationalism of *each* nation."¹³

It will be seen from the above that subordinating the national question to the social question as they do, Marxist-Leninists strive to differentiate the proletariat from the bourgeoisie of the nation on the one hand and to unite with the proletariat of the other nations, on the other. As a corollary of the above, Marxist-Leninists are not obliged, even while fighting for the right of self-determination—which in the last analysis means the right to secede—to support automatically and in each case the act of secession. "*Other conditions being equal*," Lenin reminds us, "the class-conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger state. It will always fight against medieval particularism, and will always welcome the closest possible economic amalgamation of large territories in which the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie can develop on a broad basis."¹⁴

Variegated Pattern

These are the basic theoretical principles that guided the Russian Bolsheviks in their struggles for the emancipation of the toiling people of their vast country as well as for the liberation of numerous nations from the prison-house of nations that was the feudal-imperialist tsarist state. These basic guidelines must also illumine the path of the Indian Marxists in their struggles for the revolutionary solution of the national question in this country. For a creative application of these basic guidelines, it is however necessary to undertake a comparative evaluation of the nature and features of the national problems in the two countries, India and the pre-revolutionary Russia, to note the points of similarity and dissimilarity between them.

From an overall view, the national problems in the two countries bear many striking similarities. Tsarist Russia was inhabited by more than 100 peoples. Though a strictly scientific and accurate estimate of the number of languages and dialects spoken in India is yet to be made, there is no question that their number is very high. According to the 1951 census, 771 languages and dialects were spoken in this country.

There are many other similarities in the historical process of the formation of both Russia and India as multinational states. An authoritative account of this process in Russia says: "The national composition of

the population has been built up over a period of several thousand years, during the long process of development and interaction of numerous tribes, peoples and nations, which arose in different periods of human history, and which differed from each other economically, culturally and linguistically."¹⁶ This description about Russia is equally applicable to India.

"Some peoples of former tsarist Russia, mainly in the European part where capitalism developed relatively rapidly towards the second half of the 19th century, were formed into bourgeois nations (e.g. Russians, Ukrainians, Tartars, Armenians and Georgians). Among other nationalities this was still not completed before the Great October Socialist Revolution."¹⁶ This unevenness in national articulation is also a feature of the development on the Indian subcontinent. While a number of advanced peoples have already blossomed into nationhood, there are some—numerically smaller peoples—particularly in the north-east who are yet to reach that stage.

The similarities between tsarist Russia and present-day India perhaps end there. In one very vital respect at least the dissimilarity between the two is striking. In the tsarist state, the Great-Russian nation was the dominant nation which exploited and oppressed in varying degrees all the other nations of the empire; in India today, *there is no single dominant nation.*

Internal Colonization

During the process of the formation of the Russian people into a bourgeois nation—from the seventeenth century to the second half of the nineteenth—the Russians continuously extended the state boundaries to the south and the east and absorbed various other peoples within the Russian state, a process characterized by Lenin as internal colonization. Some aspects of this process of colonization are discussed in a Soviet textbook: After the Caucasian war of 1864, tsarist administrative measures

helped draw the Caucasus into developing Russian capitalism... But the remnants of patriarchal feudal system in the Transcaucasus coupled with the military feudal methods of rule adopted by the tsarist administration hampered the development of capitalist relations. The Transcaucasus remained an agrarian region and was a source of raw material and a market for Russian industry.¹⁷

Following the tsarist conquest of central Asia in 1864-1885, the concentration of power in the hands of the military authorities facilitated the introduction of a colonial regime and the suppression of any manifestation of discontent on the part of the local population. The building of the main line of the Transcaucasian Railway between 1880 and 1896 accelerated the conversion of central Asia into a cotton-growing area and a market for Russia's industrial goods.¹⁸

"The southern and eastern rim of Russia to an even greater extent became colonies of Russian capitalism" and, as a consequence, became the victim of "the 'great power' politics of Russian tsarism and the arbitrary rule of the tsar's officials" and this led to "the ruin of local cottage

industries by competition from without and the ruin of the masses of peasants and craftsmen".¹⁹

In his study, *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin shows how "the southern and eastern outer regions of European Russia...constitute in the economic sense, colonies of central European Russia. The term colony is still more applicable to the other outer regions, for example, the Caucasus". He narrates how the penetration of the manufactures of the Russian industry systematically ruined the local cottage industry and was even "ruthlessly divesting the proud mountaineer of his picturesque national costume and dressing him in the livery of European flunkey."²⁰

Indeed, "the tsarist government ignored national peculiarities of the Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Lithuanian, Turkeman, Uzbek, Kazakh, Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijan peoples; etc., prohibited the use of national languages in schools and institutions, attacked all expressions of national culture".²¹

Regional Disparity

The colonial character of the peripheral regions of the empire vis-a-vis the Russian centre was glaringly reflected in the wide disparity in the growth of the modern large-scale industry. According to official statistics of the distribution of steam-engine capacity, quoted by Lenin, in 1892, out of a total capacity of 345,209 hp, European Russia accounted for 256,469 hp or 74 per cent compared with 5283 or 1.5 per cent of the Caucasus and 2111 or 0.6 per cent of Siberia and Turkestan.²²

Unlike the situation in tsarist Russia, there is no single dominant nation in the multinational Indian state today. The role that the Great-Russian colonizers had played in the outer regions of European Russia and other regions of the tsarist empire was historically played by the British imperialists in the colonial period of development in India. With the termination of the colonial regime in 1947, the situation underwent a basic change. Even in the pattern of colonial development, there was at least one significant difference between Russia and India: within the geographical boundaries of the Russian empire, as we have earlier noted, a particular region—the homeland of the dominant Great-Russian nation—had prospered at the cost of the rest of the state; in India, on the other hand, while the whole country was yoked to the service of the British metropolitan finance-capitalist interests and although there were wide disparities in the development of the different parts of the country—as also between the so-called British provinces as a whole and the princely states—there was no single region that prospered at the cost of the rest of the country. On the contrary, subservience to the metropolis-colony nexus led to a more or less comparable level of development of the three widely dispersed regions around the three major port towns, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

Since independence, although the regional and national disparities have not been eliminated (indeed as between the more advanced regions

like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Punjab, and states like Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram, regional disparities have widened further) there has been a certain levelling up of development among the more advanced states of the Indian Union.

Paradoxes in Multinationality

On the surface the national question in India today presents quite a few paradoxes, which calls for scrutiny.

1 Maharashtra and West Bengal are the two most industrialized and in many other respects most advanced states, let alone being dominant groups. The Maharashtrian and Bengali nationalities have little control over the economy of their own states. The relatively large industrial bases in these two states are owned and controlled by people belonging to other nationalities (including the British in the case of West Bengal).

2 Rajasthani (Marwari) capital is a dominant factor in the indigenous sector of modern (capitalist) economy in India, but the state of Rajasthan is one of the more backward parts of the country.

3 Though the Hindi language has been given a predominant status among all Indian languages, the Hindi-speaking belt as a whole continues to lag behind many other states of the Indian Union in terms of generally accepted indices of development.

4 The bureaucracy which acts as the steel-frame for establishing and safeguarding the preponderant position of the ruling nation in a multinational state is invariably dominated by the same ruling nation or nationality. In India, however, as shown in table I, people from the five states Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and Kerala account for over one half of class I and class II officers of the central government. It

TABLE I
STATEWISE DOMICILE OF TOP GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

	Class I	Class II
Total	18,920	22,743
of which:		
Tamil Nadu	2,862	2,854
Punjab	2,577	3,575
West Bengal	2,452	3,649
Maharashtra	1,923	2,101
Kerala	1,149	1,237
Sub-total	10,963	13,416
Uttar Pradesh	2,513	2,878
Bihar	386	457
Madhya Pradesh	332	387
Rajasthan	305	339
Sub-total	3,563	4,061

SOURCE: United News of India, 1967.

should be remembered that Tamil Nadu, far from being the home of a dominant nationality, is the base of a thinly disguised separatist movement. Bengalis and Keralites for their part have long been vociferously complaining about a raw deal from the centre. And both Maharashtra and Punjab had to pass through fiery ordeals even to secure linguistic states for themselves. The four Hindi-speaking states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, on the other hand, accounting for about 40 per cent of the total population, held only about a quarter of these top-level central jobs.

5 In the distribution of industrial licences, advances by commercial banks and central financial institutions and investments by LIC, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu hold the topmost positions while the Hindi-speaking states, including Uttar Pradesh, stand much lower down as seen in table II.

TABLE II
ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

State	Bank advances 30 June 1973	IFCI loans 30 June 1974	IDBI advances 1973-74	Industrial LIC licences 1952-1967	invest- ments
	(Rs in crores)				
Maharashtra	1686	106	249	3084	244
West Bengal	886	428	98	1854	136
Tamil Nadu	682	62	152	1149	142
Uttar Pradesh	369	44	37	748	109
Rajasthan	92	17	20	203	66
Bihar	132	25	42	571	34
Madhya Pradesh	118	10	31	275	53

SOURCES: Government of West Bengal, *Economic Review 1974-75*; Government of Kerala, *Alternative Policies for the Fourth Five Year Plan*, p 106.

Multinational Big Business

All this conclusively proves that though India is a multinational state, there is no single dominant nation in the country, exploiting and oppressing the other nations. This of course does not mean an absence of discrimination against or disparities among, the constituent nationalities. According to any set of indices, a number of states will be found to be at the receiving end—like Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan not to mention Nagaland or Mizoram.

The explanation of all the apparent paradoxes noted above lies in the specific character of the predominant stratum of the Indian ruling class, the Indian monopoly capital. It needs no elaboration that the apex power structure in India is formed by a thin layer of monopoly capital which accounts for about one half of the entire assets of the organized private sector and which has been able to subordinate the vast public sector.

to its own basic interests. This monopoly capitalist stratum at the top of the Indian economy is a composite entity of a number of national regional constituents. Some years ago this writer had subjected the data provided by the report of the Monopoly Inquiry Commission to a somewhat crude analysis for a study of the national question in India. Some excerpts are quoted below from that piece.

Though the criteria and methodology employed by the Monopoly Commission are not free from defects, the table of the 75 top industrial houses (given in the report and classified by this writer) into nationality and region groups is a fair picture of the structure of the economic power in India. It reveals as follows:

- i) Foreign business houses, all British except one, continue to occupy a place of prominence which is generally unsuspected. Their share in the total assets of the 75 houses was about 13.5 per cent.
- ii) The largest single block of assets is held by Marwaris, accounting for nearly a quarter share of the total.
- iii) The second largest share is held by the Parsis.
- iv) The share of Hindustanis proper at Rs 207 crores is less than eight per cent of the total. . .

If Marwaris and Hindustanis taken as a single national group (as Rajasthani and Hindi may be taken as a single language), the combined total will be Rs 872 crores or about one-third of the total of all the 75 big business houses.

But by the same logic, Parsis and Gujaratis should be reckoned as one and same national group. Then their combined total will be about Rs 958 crores or about 37 per cent of total for all the 75 houses. . .

The above figures do not bespeak of economic domination of Hindustani big business. What emerges from the statistical picture is the existence of domination by a multinational big business, including a fair proportion of foreign, mainly British, interests.²²

'Market Forces'

Although dissensions and bickering among the constituent nationalities politically help the paper-thin stratum of Indian monopoly capital to maintain and perpetuate its domination over the vast country, the ruling multinational big business is not directly interested in favouring any particular nationality or region. The five-year plan documents, to the extent they reflect the subjective desire of the ruling elite, systematically harp on the need for "reducing regional disparities". But the actual working of the socio-economic system leads to a perpetuation and in cases, an accentuation of the disparities. As the *Draft Fifth Five Year Plan* admits,

Market forces normally operate in such a way that growth tends to be attracted to the already developed areas. The economies of agglomeration, size and specialization accentuate the trends which widen the inequalities between different areas, making it difficult to alter the growth process in favour of the less developed areas and

to evolve policies concerning spatial allocation of resources and activities.²⁸

Since 'market forces' in terms of the concrete Indian reality reflect, in the last analysis, the interests of the dominant Indian monopoly capital, the perpetuation of the political rule of this stratum, therefore, tends to widen the regional disparities and to doom the backward nationalities to continued degradation. More, since the domination of monopoly capital acts as powerful fetters on the expansion of productive forces and thereby intensifies the crisis of the basically stagnant Indian economy, it directly contributes to the intensification of miseries of the more backward national regions of the country, who, standing at the base of national pyramid as they do, are made to bear the entire burden of the developing crisis. Hence, the national question in India today is an offshoot of the social question—that of the elimination of the monopoly rule.

Since the urban-based monopoly capital rules in close alliance with and as the protector of the agrarian vested interests, the consolidation of the national consciousness of the different nationalities, which is dependent on the uplift and emancipation of the peasant masses is also contingent on the liquidation of the power of the monopoly formations. The solution of the national question in India, therefore, demands the unification of the popular forces belonging to all the nationalities in India in the struggle against the domination of the monopoly capital.

Self-determination

In the absence of any oppressing nation which enjoys a preponderant position vis-a-vis the constituent nationalities of the multinational state that is India, there is no need or justification for demanding the full-fledged right of self-determination, which in the last analysis means the right to secede.

On the contrary, the militant unity of the entire popular forces, which evolved during the course of long struggles against the colonial rule must be carried forward and transformed into a revolutionary alliance against the multinational monopoly capital. *Against the multinational ruling power, multinational unity of the toiling people has to be forged.*

The regional bourgeoisie (that is, belonging to the various nationalities that comprise the Indian peoples) most of the time play a role subservient to the multinational top stratum or at best only occasionally voice a feeble demand for greater autonomy from the growingly centralized control of the all-India monopoly stratum. On the other hand, they quite often indulge in national rivalries in relation to neighbouring nationalities! While welcoming any dissent on the part of these nationalities against the multinational formation, the proletariat must not only keep away from the inter-nationality rivalries, but also actively combat these reactionary diversions, by forging closer unity among the toiling people of the contending nationalities.

Unable and unwilling to seek a revolutionary solution of the economic

stagnation that arises from the present moribund socio-economic order, the bourgeoisie of some of the nationalities often resort to separatist movements, such as the DMK in Tamil Nadu or the so-called Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh. In certain states, even sections of the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie rally around the disruptive slogan of reservation of job opportunities for the 'sons of the soil'. These moves are essentially forms of accommodation sought by dispirited and demoralized forces within the present crisis-ridden system. They divert the attention of the proletariat and the toiling masses from the root cause of all the basic problems, namely, the social order, and disrupt the revolutionary unity of the popular forces. Hence, the revolutionary proletariat and its allies must oppose these reactionary strivings tooth and nail.

The above is only a sketchy outline of the related issues and Marxist approach to them. Within this broad framework, the national question in India needs further examination, particularly in relation to the problems of the outlying regions like Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, or Sikkim, as well as those of the Santhals, Girijans and other smaller tribes in central and peninsular India. It is to be hoped that Marxist analysts would treat those problems with the importance that they really deserve.

¹ Marx and Engels frequently used to illustrate this point with reference to the Irish question. Marx, for instance, wrote to Kugelmanni: "I have become more and more convinced—and the only question is to drive this conviction home to the English working class—that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union...And this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it will have to join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England is crippled by the strife with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England. The *prime condition* of emancipation here—the overthrow of the English landed oligarchy—remains impossible because its position here cannot be stormed so long as it maintains its strongly entrenched outposts in Ireland." (Karl Marx, *Letters to Kugelmann*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1941, pp 95-6.

² J V Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Burmon Publishing House, Calcutta, p 15.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ V I Lenin *Collected Works*, Vol 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, p 456.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol 21, p 403.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol 6, p 328,

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol 20, p 22,

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 34-5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 411-12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol 20, p 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, p 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p 24.

- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p 45. Lenin's emphasis. He, however, makes it emphatically clear that the centralization he has in mind is not the bureaucratic but democratic centralization; *ibid.*, pp 46-7.
- ¹⁵ *Countries of the World, Information Series*, R Maxwell (Ed.) Vol 1: "Information USSR" prepared in collaboration with Soviet Encyclopaedia, pp 95-6.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 96.
- ¹⁷ *Outline History of the USSR*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1960, p 146.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 146-47.
- ²⁰ V I Lenin, *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Moscow 1957, p 652.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p 556.
- ²² Ajit Roy, "Some Aspects of the National Question in India", *Marxist Review*, Calcutta, October 1967, p 22.
- ²³ Planning Commission, *The Draft Fifth Five Year Plan*, Vol 3 p 282.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD

Class Character of the Nationalist Movement

AUGUST 15, 1947 marked the final solution of India's national problem if the problem is seen as merely one of investing the accredited leadership of the nation with the governance of the country.

But the manner of the transfer of power showed that the national problem in its wider sense was getting complicated rather than resolved: the unity of the nation cutting across the barriers of castes, religious communities, linguistic-cultural groups and tribes—the unity which was the ambition of the leaders and participants in the national movement to forge when hundreds of them laid down their lives for freedom—was being disrupted. Not only was the country partitioned, but the division between the two major religious communities, which led to the formation of the states, ended in one of the worst carnages in human history. This was so painful to the tallest leader of the nation and the Generalissimo of the national struggle, Mahatma Gandhi, that he publicly expressed his sense of disillusionment by dissociating himself from the countrywide celebrations at the attainment of independence.

Ever since those days of joy mixed with frustration at the way in which independence was won, the relations between the two communities were more severely strained, almost to breaking point. Repeated instances of anti-Muslim riots in India and anti-Hindu riots in Pakistan marked

the internal political situation within the two countries while tensions, conflicts and even wars marked the relations between the two states. During free India's first five months, which it was left for Mahatma Gandhi to live, he raised his feeble voice at the tragic turn of events which was capped by the dastardly, murderous attack to which he fell victim.

It was however not merely a question of Hindu-Muslim relations. Other problems of national unity like casteism, linguistic divisions, and the position of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, also became more and more complex. Unrest broke out on many of these questions: language riots in Assam; anti-Hindi upsurge in Tamil Nadu; separatist Telangana and Andhra movements in Andhra Pradesh. The situation became so serious that the Government of India thought it necessary to convene what was called a National Integration Conference, form a National Integration Council and set up several NIC sub-committees to deal with specific problems of 'national integration'.

Setting the Stage for Collaboration

Thus far about the national problem in its internal aspect, of forging national unity. With regard to its external aspect, namely, India's subjection to the foreign rulers being put an end to, post-independence developments were not so rosy as they appeared when power was handed over by the British overlords to the national leaders. For, what was transferred on 15 August 1947 was nothing but formal administrative power which, as is well-known, is different from real power over the national economy. While the new Government of India was formally free to arrange its affairs—internal and external—as it liked, power had been made over on the basis of a compromise between the foreign monopoly capitalists on the one hand and the Indian landlord-capitalist classes on the other.

The latter, being primarily interested in developing the economy, polity and the socio-cultural life of India along capitalist lines, wanted to continue the process initiated under British rule, develop capitalism without shattering the feudal and precapitalist institutions at the base and enlist the services of the dominant classes and strata of precapitalist society. They also continued India's economic ties with foreign monopolists with the difference that, while the foreigners who controlled the national economy were almost exclusively British, independence meant that monopolies from other capitalist countries, mainly United States and also West Germany, Japan, France and elsewhere, started penetrating the national economy, even though the British hold was retained. The result was that, despite resistance from sections of the ruling classes on occasion and the links that have of late been forged with the socialist countries, the grip of foreign monopoly capitalists on our economy has been getting tighter and tighter.

This increasing control of foreign monopolies on the national economy is reflected in external political relations, since economic

dependence obliges the ruling classes to give up their own proclaimed anti-imperialist policies. Many such policies, as on nationalization, are being given up; such restrictions, as on the percentage of shares permitted to be owned by foreigners, are being relaxed. India is in fact unable to adopt those uncompromising anti-imperialist positions which many Asian and African countries are bold enough to adopt.

Both internally and externally therefore, the national problem remains unsolved, leading to the emergence of several problems like casteism, communalism, and separatism—linguistic, provincial and regional. These have, in certain regions (like Kashmir, Nagaland and Mizoram), led to such a deterioration of the situation that the discontented have to be kept in subjection through semi-military means—a situation which is taken advantage of by imperialism. It is therefore necessary for us to examine the essence of the national question in its external as well as internal aspects.

Burden of the Past

It should, at the very outset, be borne in mind that the leaders of the national movement, being essentially bourgeois nationalists, were unable to have a comprehensive understanding of the problem as a whole; their class interests, reflected in the socio-economic theories which guided their activities, made them totally incapable of finding a proper solution for any one of the innumerable problems whose totality makes up India's national problem.

Let us begin with the internal aspect of the national question. The problem, after all, is primarily one of reorganizing the social, economic, cultural and political institutions of the nation as to make it a modern bourgeois nation. The external element of nationalism (the urgency of ending the foreign rule) made its appearance when the internal forces proved incapable of completing the process of modernization.

India, as is well known, has an ancient civilization of which its people are rightly proud. This ancient civilization however is not an unmixed blessing. It meant that, unlike Europe which, in historic times has had three successive social formations—slavery, feudalism and capitalism—the birth of each being accompanied by an all-round revolution in social life, India has had a relatively unchanging society. (We use the term “relatively unchanging”, since changes were imperceptably taking place in the social order. These changes however were taking place within the framework of the very same combination of the three distinct social institutions of the caste, the village community and the joint family). As Karl Marx pointed out in one of his penetrating studies on the nature of Indian society before the British overlordship,

all the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms

of reconstitution yet appearing. This loss of its old world, with no gain of any new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindu, and separates Hindustan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history.¹

This does not of course mean that the forces of modernization (which means the forces of capitalist development) had not made their appearance in India. They had, in fact, started developing and made their impact, as can be seen in such economic developments as the accumulation of trading capital and the partial use of this capital for the development of manufacturing industries. Politically too, the modern state had started rising, albeit in its embryonic form. Long before this process of capitalist development could be completed, foreign capital made its inroads into the economy and from there extended itself to polity and started influencing the socio-cultural life of the nation. The result was that, instead of an indigenous capitalism developing as an independent force, it was foreign capitalism that became dominant and exercised its supremacy over the entire national life.

Conservatives and Modernizers

This gave a peculiar character to our national movement: what appeared to be *militant nationalism* in the early stages of the struggle against foreign rulers was, in fact a *conservative force*, that is, wanted to conserve all that had become outmoded in the socio-cultural life of the country, while the forces of modernism, that is, capitalist development, were the partisans of *compromise with the foreign rulers*.

This is illustrated by the visible contrast between the militant anti-British revolts of early days which came to a head in the great national upheavals of 1856-58 (called, among others, by Karl Marx as 'India's War of Independence') and the forces of modern nationalism which made their appearance in the 1870s and culminated in the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885.

The former were the representatives of the outmoded social order: the dethroned princes, the zamindars and other big landlords who lost their landed property, and the heads of religious and caste institutions who saw in the capitalist transformation brought about by the British rulers a threat to the continuance of their outmoded rule. They were however uncompromising in their opposition to foreign rulers and were using every means, including fire power, against the enemy.

As opposed to them were the modernizers who looked upon the foreign rulers as models for their own country as it would be in future; their only grouse against the British rulers was that their country was being denied the opportunity to go through the same process of (capitalist) modernization as had been gone through in the rulers' own country.

The moderation of those early nationalists can be seen in the scathing criticism of British exploitation made by the venerable father of Indian

political economy, Dadabhai Naoroji, who wrote the pioneering work, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. For him and his contemporaries, exploitation of India by the British rulers was 'un-British', since they looked upon Great Britain as the model for the freedom, democracy and socio-economic progress which they wanted in their own country. Behind the politically moderate form of their nationalism therefore was the content of their ambition to modernize the nation, that is, to overturn the outmoded Indian society and give it a modern capitalist character. They were therefore progressive, even revolutionary in the socio-cultural sense, in comparison with the militant nationalists who wanted to defend the outmoded socio-cultural and political institutions of the country against capitalist inroads.

Nor was this contrast between militant nationalists who were conservative in their social outlook and moderates who stood for modernization confined to the early years of India's national movement. It was in fact handed down to successive generations of India's nationalists. Revolutionaries in Bengal who drew inspiration from Kali Puja; Tilak who organized Ganesh Puja as part of his militant nationalism; Gandhi who held daily prayers and preached the message of reviving the "dead and dying cottage industries"—these were the best among the leaders thrown up by the national movement, fighting the 'moderates' and 'liberals' who combined their modernism with an attitude of compromising with foreign rulers. Added to these were the still more outspoken advocates of Hindu revivalism, supplemented by Islamic, Sikh and other waves of revivalism.

Architects of Disunity

Such a proliferation of revivalist movements was naturally made clever use of by the imperialist rulers who had perfected the old Roman rulers' guiding line of "dividing and ruling" in order to perpetuate their domination over the entire country. While positively evaluating the indignation at the diabolical plans of the imperialist rulers in using communalism as a major force in their struggle against the freedom movement, we should be clear that it was the concepts and programmes of bourgeois nationalism, to which the freedom movement was committed, that laid the basis on which the foreign rulers could play one section against the other.

The essential weakness of India's national movement consisted in the fact that it was headed by a class (the rising national bourgeoisie) which in its own interests compromised with the foreign overlords, the feudal princes and big landlords, and the heads of the caste, communal, tribal and other precapitalist institutions. Fear of a radical reconstruction of society internally, and of a complete break with the foreign rulers, —this was the essential character of the bourgeoisie which remained at the head of the national movement till 1947 and has been the ruling class since then.

What has been stated above is equally true of our neighbour Pakistan. It was the same class, or rather the combination of two classes

(landlords and capitalists) who stood at the head of the national movement in all the provinces of pre-partition India. The failure of that class to unify all the castes, religious communities, linguistic-cultural groups and tribal communities into a single nation led to the notorious clashes and conflicts between Hindus and Muslims which culminated in partition. It was the very same classes that transformed themselves into the ruling classes in the two countries. The result is that, though differently and in different degree, the same problems of national integration made their appearance and are getting ever more intensified on both sides of the border.

Things reached such a pass in Pakistan that its eastern wing (Bangladesh) has already seceded, while serious conflicts and clashes have occurred in other provinces like the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan. In India too, as noted above, problems like Kashmir, Nagaland and Mizoram assumed serious proportions: so did those relating to the national language, the formation of linguistic states, the lag between the advanced and backward states and regions, the division of power between the centre and the states, lead to tensions and conflicts. All this is over and above the caste and communal riots which have haunted us at every stage in post-independence years.

Towards People's Democratic India

At the root of what are called "problems of national integration" therefore lies the reality that the bourgeoisie that stood at the head of the national movement and which is in control of the economy and polity of the nation today is incapable of, and unwilling to

a) break with imperialism, make India fully self-sufficient, enable it to stand on its own legs in every respect;

b) sternly deal with those sections of India's capitalists and landlords who want to defend their narrow class or individual interests and are prepared to mortgage the destiny of the nation to foreign monopolies;

c) uproot feudal and other forms of big landlord domination over the rural areas, distribute the land of these landlords among the landless and poor sections of the rural people;

d) emancipate the masses of rural and urban poor from the centuries-old grip of caste leaders, heads of religious institutions and other remnants of an outmoded society and help the mass of the people to shape their own future along the lines of genuine modernism;

e) develop the national economy and modernize the national culture in such a way that, in a few years' time, our people can take their place among the most modern nations of the world.

Such a reversal of trends in the socio-cultural, economic and political fields is necessary if the national problem is to be solved as it should be. This is what is envisaged by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) when it calls for the struggle for building a new People's Democratic India² which includes, among other things, the following general propositions:

1 The Indian Union shall be a federation based on democratic centralism. All the states in the Indian Union shall have real autonomy and equal powers.

2 The people are sovereign, all organs of state power being elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage for all citizens who have attained the age of 18; these organs of state power shall be answerable to the people.

3 All national languages shall be equal, every one of them being recognized for use in parliament and central administration. Hindi shall not be made the obligatory official language, it being left to the people, in the course of growing economic social and intellectual intercourse, to develop in practice the most suitable language of intercommunication as between the peoples in different states of India.

4 Unity of India shall be consolidated by fostering and promoting mutual cooperation and paying special attention and rendering assistance to economically backward and weak states, regions and areas.

5 Civil liberties and democratic rights shall be guaranteed and all forms of social oppression shall be abolished. Freedom of conscience, religious belief and worship, together with those of speech, press, assembly, strike, movement and occupation shall be guaranteed. Special facilities shall be provided for scheduled castes, tribes and other backward communities in the matter of services and other amenities.

6 Abolition of inequality between man and woman. The secular character of state shall be rigorously enforced. While education shall be taken over by the state, religious minorities shall be given absolute protection.

Other proposals cover agriculture and the peasant problem, industry and labour. The party also strives for a genuinely anti-imperialist foreign policy which includes withdrawal of India from the Commonwealth, abrogation of all agreements and commitments with the UK and the USA which are against the interests of the nation or not in keeping with national dignity.

All these proposals are calculated to put an end to those compromises which the bourgeois leadership of the national movement had been making in relation to the internal and external aspects of India's national movement. They will provide a real solution for the national problem which is every day being accentuated by the class policies of the bourgeois-landlord regime.

¹ Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India," Marx and Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence 1857-1859*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, p 16.

² Communist Party of India (Marxist), *Programme*, November 1971 pp 32-41; also "Note on National Question and Amendment to Party Programme", September 1972, pp 95-108.

SHIBANI KINKAR CHAUBE

SUNIL MUNSI

AMALENDU GUHA

*Regional Development and the National
Question in North-east India*

THE APPROACH Paper to the Fifth Five Year Plan¹ for the first time noted that, in spite of the achievement of an overall growth in the country during the preceding four five-year plans and three annual plans, considerable portions of the country were deprived of the benefits of this growth or had obtained them only marginally. Special emphasis has therefore been laid on removal of regional imbalances from which stems the current talk on regional planning.

It is essential at the beginning to remove what we feel to be a conceptual vagueness about regional planning. Regional planning is not just an equivalent of a programme for the removal of economic imbalances among regions. For any developing country it is only natural that early emphasis will be put on areas which have already developed an infrastructure of growth in the colonial period.² Regional imbalance is thus partly a function of allocation of limited resources and partly a legacy of colonialism.

The developing countries of the Third World are characterized by a low level of economic development, multi-structural (plural) and somewhat archaic social relations, dependence on world capitalism, particularly world monopoly capitalism, and irrational locational pattern of the productive forces inherited from the colonial period. Most noticeable are the

following features:

- 1 Sharp regional differences in the levels of economic development; the existence of foreign enclaves, controlled by powerful capitalist monopolies in comparatively developed regions; the persistence of archaic social relations and economic structures in backward agricultural areas which impede the development of these regions;
- 2 Weakness of the economic nexus between the developed and the backward regions;
- 3 Ethnic and religious insulation of regions, which was formerly artificially sustained by the colonialists and is now utilized by neocolonialists in an effort to to preserve their control over the economic, social and political processes in the Third World countries;
- 4 Inadequate development of the infrastructure and an extremely uneven pattern of their location;
- 5 The urban network insufficiently developed, and hence, the choice of towns to be as potential nuclei of future economic regions far too narrow.³

Main Goals of Regional Planning

In this context the following goals of regional planning as an important tool of socio-economic state policy have been set:

- 1 Rational spatial (geographical) pattern of production —rational in the sense that it fully conforms to the general economic and social goals of a country;
- 2 Development of every region in a country in accordance with its natural, economic and social conditions;
- 3 Securing of a harmonious territorial balance between sectoral activities and the development of every region all within the framework of a unified national economic complex.⁴

These three main goals have been further subdivided into particular ones,

such as the creation of industrial and agro-industrial complexes, urban development and formation of new settlement patterns in conformity to production complexes of the given territories; the realization of inter-regional patterns of commodity flows; the solution of questions of employment and the regulation of migration processes, the priority development of backward areas and so on.⁵

Colonial economic development in India was meagre and concentrated chiefly on the presidency towns to which the rest of the country served as the hinterland. Extreme inter- and intra- regional disparity in economic growth was one of the many legacies of British rule in India. Within the framework of colonial backwardness for the whole of India, which grew out of the particular international division of labour imposed on this country by Great Britain, there were huge tracts of even more intense backwardness. The peripheral zones of India were certainly among them. Rugged topography and a comparatively more hostile environment

had created areas of isolation, and this was particularly true for north-east India although tea plantations and petroleum lured outsiders into the region.

Without colonial bondage when an underdeveloped country launches upon developmental planning, its initial ventures have to be locationally selective. But if the disproportionate emphasis continues over a long time, the input-output ratio between the regions is likely to stagger the process of overall growth.⁶ Besides this purely economic argument, there are strong political reasons for advocating the removal of regional imbalances.

Planning Problems

But regional planning by itself may not give the desired result. In its pure form regional planning is aimed at the removal of regional imbalances by maximizing the productive capacity of a region. It demands that the choice of priorities be informed by egalitarian motives. If, on the other hand, regional planning takes the form of selective promotion of particular sectors of the economy of the region, mainly with a view to serving the metropolitan interest, such development must be viewed as a hangover from the colonial era. For, in the case, (1) development of particular sectors may, rather than serving the regional needs, well be at the cost of other sectors of the economy, (2) the region may in terms of exportable surplus, be confronted with a buyer's market, as has been the fate of many Latin American countries or of the tea plantation industry in India (an economic activity seriously involving north-east India). Such a situation may be in many ways no better than the situation obtaining from total neglect of a region.

This is not to prescribe a scheme for autarchy in the name of regional planning. For, the concept of a self-contained economic region is anachronistic in the modern setting. Consequently, generation of exportable surplus in certain sectors even at the cost of certain others may be justified, provided that the export-earning is meaningful to the developmental needs of the region as a part of the national economy. In particular situations, even the export-earning of the region may not be adequately meaningful, that is, compensatory to the region concerned in the interest of the macro-economy of the nation. In such a case, the sacrifice made by a region or a section of the people must be reciprocally shared by the other regions or other sections of the people. A lacuna in this system of sharing the benefit or the cost of growth may create instability and encourage disaffection. The truth of this hypothesis can be tested with reference to the disintegration of Pakistan whose eastern wing was long smarting under the grievance that the major part of foreign exchange earnings from jute export was appropriated for industrialization of the western wing.

So much for the negative aspect of regional planning. There may be serious positive problems involved in the process. In the developing

countries, more than in developed ones, there are likely to be particularly backward regions with practically no or very little surplus-generating economic activity. The lopsided way of modernization, characteristic of most developing societies—putting greater emphasis on the ‘modern way of life’ than on the social ability to produce—may only enhance the needs for conspicuous consumption. Even if the needs are controlled by choice or by command, the developmental planning for such area has to be based on subvention. And as the central government that grants the subvention is itself constrained by limited resources, the regional economic plan is doubly constrained.

Regionalization

The chief technical problem of regional planning is regionalization. Regional planning in the West has been generally understood in a differential context. Selected ‘backward areas’ have been the focus of intensive developmental planning. In the context of north-east India, as it will be seen, regionalization involves integration as well as differentiation. As all schemes of regionalization must be based on the criterion of homogeneity, identification of the components of this homogeneity becomes a primary task of the planner:

The conceptually unique problems of regional planning appear to be mainly empirical in character and centre around the difficulties encountered in defining a “region”. Traditionally three different approaches have been used in defining regions. The first stresses *homogeneity* with respect to some one or combination of physical, economic, social or other characteristics; the second emphasizes so-called *nodality* or polarization, usually around some central urban place; and the third is programming—or policy—oriented, concerned mainly with administrative coherence or identity between the area being studied and available political institutions for effectuating political decisions. Naturally enough regional definitions, as established in practice, often represent a compromise between these different pure types.⁷

Integrally connected with the problem of regionalization is the problem of location of industries, the key to industrialization as well as several intra-regional tensions. According to Alayev, optimal location should take into account not only the transport cost. Transport cost is reduced with the technological and scientific revolution. On the other hand, the effect of location is a result of the enterprise, their interconnection and availability of infrastructures, skilled manpower, a scientific and technological lease and the conditions of their interaction with the environment.⁸

The problem of regional planning becomes politically charged when ethnicity and economics are ill-adjusted within its framework. “The economic backwardness of individual areas is a result in a number of cases of the disregard for the interests of some or other ethnic group, and

this constitutes an objective condition for setting in motion the forces of disintegration" writes Alayev.⁹ This is particularly true of north-east India where the legacy of a century of imperialist neglect and isolation has built up a major challenge to the task of nation-building. It is almost axiomatic that ethnicity and regionalism are the functions of a low level of production.

It is equally axiomatic that an appropriate regionalization is one of the techniques that help strengthen the unity of the people as well as their further economic development. For regional planning dictates two kinds of balancing of interests—inter-regional and intra-regional. The first balance is to be achieved mainly by means of allocation of federal grants; the second will necessarily imply effective collaboration among the equally placed states within a region. In a multi-communal and multi-cultural country like India, where provincial or state boundaries have been so drawn as to leave every political unit with a number of 'minority' groups, alteration of state boundaries has become a regular feature of national politics vitiated by parochial rivalries. Such boundaries may conform to the administrative needs of maintenance of law and order, but are hardly capable of contributing to viable economic cooperation.¹⁰ At the present shapes, states in India are much less than even proximately ideal economic regions; the multi-state economic zones set up in 1956 are, on the other hand, yet to become meaningful entities.

North-east India as a Region

In the Indian federal set-up, states are the basic units of planning exercises. But the identification of north-east India as a region is primarily a geo-political accident bearing upon international development. Emerging out of the once "north-east frontier of Bengal", this region comprises seven political units¹¹ namely, the states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and the union territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Spate and his colleagues, following an 'empirical' scheme of regionalization, which, they admit, "may shock purists, whether they be adherents of physiographic regions or functionalists of "Regional Science",¹² call it "The Eastern Borderland" mainly keeping in view the almost complete coincidence of natural and political boundaries.

In 1955 the States Reorganization Commission anticipated the political integration of north-east India through the merger of Manipur and Tripura with the then composite state of Assam; and in 1956 the States Reorganization Act put Assam along with West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in the eastern zone. Subsequently, the union territories of Manipur and Tripura were joined in this eastern zone. After the 1972 reorganization of north-east India, however, the north-eastern states dropped out of the eastern zone and a concerted effort to build north-east India as an economic zone in itself has been undertaken through the North Eastern Council. It is nothing short of poetic justice that the political disintegration of north-east India has given urgency to the sense of interdependence

among the breakaways. It is this element of *interdependence* which, more than homogeneity, justifies the treatment of north-east India as an integrated region.

The generally backward economic condition of the region supplies the element of homogeneity as the physical features strengthen the need for interdependence. The 4000-kilometre-long international boundary makes it impossible for any state to be economically developed independently of the others. Except the North East Frontier Railway and National Highway 34 running close along the railway, there is no land route to the rest of India. Even the proposed goods traffic across the territory of Bangladesh is not likely to alter the communication situation substantially. Except tea and mineral oil in Assam, the region has almost no major industrial activity. Agriculture, yet undeveloped, is the chief economy of the area. Over and above all these, the entire focus of the north-eastern market seems to be Gauhati.

Admittedly, these conditions weigh heavily in favour of Assam. Assam would naturally like to enter the all-India market with the strength of a rich hinterland provided that the loss of territories is compensated by the effective reforging of links in the interests of all the units in the region. In fact Assam stands to gain out of the anticipated relation of equality, for there is every likelihood that the political status of the new states and union territories of north-east India will unleash strong trends towards economic growth.

Overland Network

It may be worthwhile to note the historical background of the development of communication in the region and its implications. The British entered 'the north-east frontier' from Bengal as a result of which the communication network was heavily tilted towards Bengal. Although Assam was constituted into a Chief Commissioner's province in 1874, in 1905 it was merged into a composite province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. That controversial action was undone in 1912 due to political circumstances but Assam and her neighbouring areas were, throughout the British period, left as an appendage rather than an integral part of British India.

Because of historical reasons, the Khasi Hills, the Garo Hills, the Lushai (Mizo) Hills, as well as Tripura and Cachar, had greater communication with Bengal than with Assam. As administration entered into the Naga hills and the north-east frontier tracts from the Brahmaputra valley, the districts therein developed communication with the Brahmaputra valley. This structure of colonial communication was broken overnight by the partition of India. After the political reorganization of north-east India the communication picture became further complicated, for each state will now naturally demand the establishment of communicational node in its capital for consolidating its own state market. Consequently the immediate task in communication-building in north-east India

appears to be threefold:

- 1 Linking each district-headquarters with the state-capital
- 2 Linking each state-capital with the Brahmaputra valley, and
- 3 Improving the links of the Brahmaputra valley with the rest of the country.

Fulfilment of these tasks will not bring about the most satisfactory results. For, as each state would like to forge direct links with the others in the region, the districts in each state would like to trade with each other as also with states outside the region. Trade, both legal and illegal, is carried on across the international borders: demand for legal trade with countries on the border is likely to grow in future, especially with Bangladesh which is within easy access. These demands may be fulfilled over time provided that an effective beginning is made now.

To begin with, there is a strong case for undertaking the extension of a broad-gauge line to Gauhati. When the broad gauge was extended to Jogighopa the projection working at the basis of this decision was the development of Jogighopa into a river-port for unloading the bulk of supplies from upper Assam. If successful, this would reduce the traffic congestion at Gauhati. As it happened, the difficulties involved in change-over from the river traffic to the railway proved too much for the growth of Jogighopa. Therefore, until the broad-gauge line is extended to Gauhati, its inter-regional links will remain somewhat tilted in favour of the metre-gauge connection with northern India denying it the full benefit of the Calcutta market. This does not amount to an advocacy for the exclusion of the metre-gauge. An ideal trade relation will rather depend on the simultaneous operation of the two lines, given, of course, the technological feasibility of the present Brahmaputra bridge. Otherwise, and if the railway remains the major transportation means in inter-regional trade and there is no alternative provision for broad gauge beyond Jogighopa,¹³ the focus will very likely shift to New Bongaigaon. The broad-gauge question therefore demonstrates the interdependence of intra-regional and inter-regional trade of north-east India.

Planning from Below

What has been argued above is a need for the shift of emphasis from 'the growth poles' theory of regional planning, which presumes that "developmental waves will move out to the hinterland from the growth pole".¹⁴ According to this paradigm, industrial growth spreads through the creation of urban centres whose capital costs, in the language of WW Rostow, "may be high, but whose population and market organization help to make industrialization an on-going process."¹⁵ In essence, this is the new fashionable 'functionalist' view of what we called 'lopsided modernization'. In practice, however, the so-called 'growth poles', although conceived in the context of inter-industry linkage¹⁶, are subsidiary stations of metropolitan big business, national or international. In terms of trade as well as input-output analysis the 'growth poles' become the

instruments of extraction of raw material from the hinterland and promotion of sale of manufactured articles on the non-equivalent basis.

A shift of emphasis will bring to focus the way industrialization took place in Europe till the first half of the nineteenth century, namely, by development from the local roots. That will certainly be the way to socialist planning. In north-east India, where industrialization is not within the capacity of local entrepreneurs, the choice lies between two policies: either its towns may be linked up with big industrial undertakings in the private sector or the state may develop industries, within the range of the national plans, in a way that can benefit the local people. A lesson may be drawn by contrasting the tea and petroleum industries in the private (monopoly) sectors with the state-run Assam Oil Company (AOC) and Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC).

This is not again a plea for so-called 'democratic decentralization' in planning. State governments and local authorities have already a great deal of power and influence in matters of plans concerning their regions. They lack resources. Either they get the resources or there is a right type of choice of priorities in developmental plans, whatever their sources.

In a way the problem of economic development of north-east India is a miniature form of the same problem in relation to India. For India the primary goal of planning was set as self-reliance, in the form of freedom from the economic control of international monopoly capital. It will be a blunder to place north-east India at the bottom of a hierarchy controlled by neocolonial interests.¹⁷ Only a firm commitment to the national economic goals can solve the problems of the teeming millions of this country including that section which lives in north-east India.

Structural Planning

The communication system as such, it should be noted, is not a sufficiently strong infrastructure for growth; it is only a condition for marketization. Whether marketization will render a growth potential to the local economy or will be an instrument for draining it out will depend upon the structural potentiality of the local economy. It will be seen in the statistics furnished that even the infrastructural indices of literacy, schools and hospitals, frequently associated with 'modernization' have no correlation with the actual growth indices in the units of north-east India. It may therefore be more useful to place the emphasis on the *structure*, rather than the infrastructure, of the economy.

The economic structure of north-east India differs from the rest of India's only in degree, not in kind. As in India as a whole, the north-eastern economy is multistructural (plural), the relatively uneconomical methods of production covering proportionately bigger areas than the average areas held by them in the total economy of the country. This difference in degree is a function not only of the physical geography of the region, but also of socio-political conditions. A comparison between Himachal Pradesh and any hill state of north-east India can prove that point.

Beginning from the pastoral economy of some of the frontier groups and Nepali settlers, the north-east has all major types of economic activities upto the sophisticated petro-chemical industries.

Yet, the industrial sector is particularly weak inasmuch as there is virtually no metal-based industry worth the name in the whole region. Exploitation of mineral resources, except oil, is yet to start. There is a vast possibility of agro-based and forest-based industries in the region. The existing communication facilities, built mainly for administrative and security purposes, are inadequate for the development of such industries. More important, a solid agro-forest industrial development will need a great deal of development in agriculture and forest preservation. Apparently the slash-and-burn method of agriculture, along with demographic pressure, is steadily destroying forests and washing out soil on the highlands.

Agricultural Sector

There is a great deal of debate on the desirability of continuing with *jhum* (shifting cultivation), the most primary form of agriculture prevalent in the region. It has however been proved by experience that there is no psychological fixation with *jhum* in any part of the country. But there is a necessity for a well-thought-out physical planning and heavy financial investment to convert at least a major part of *jhum* land for the purpose of sedentary cultivation. Meanwhile, it is necessary to plan for more rational utilization of the *jhum* land. Presently a great deal of research has been done into the social and economic implication of *jhuming*.¹⁸ One only hopes that the natural scientists would take as much interest in the problem and enter into meaningful dialogue with the social scientists engaged in it.

Because of demographic and economic pressures, shifting cultivation has almost disappeared in the plains and the basins, making room for sedentary cultivation. The problem of sedentary cultivation is twofold: technological and sociological. Fertilizers, high-yielding seeds and irrigation, by common knowledge, have been largely responsible for working the wonder that was called 'the green revolution'. It was, however, noticed that agricultural technology is capital-intensive and, unless accompanied by social measures, limited in production potentiality. A big farmer resorts to multiple cropping (including cash-crops) only when blessed with the facilities of major irrigation. Small farmers, on the other hand, improvise their irrigation system for the purpose of multiple cropping. And this article considers multiple cropping as a major indicator of growth, being associated with intensive farming. For north-east India, however, there is one technological problem needing immediate attention: flood control and drainage, which it should be possible to tackle jointly with the problem of irrigation.

The most prestigious sector of agriculture in north-east India is of course plantation introduced in the early phase of colonialism. With the

end of the colonial rule, but more so with the intensification of international competition in tea, the grand old industry of Assam is causing worry to all concerned. Tea industry is not growing. Only the most profitable gardens are retained by the monopoly houses owning them. Others are victims of speculative exchange of ownership. Many such gardens are being disposed of, plot by plot, to enterprising peasants. The gardens which survive are compensating their dwindling profits by intensifying the exploitation of their labourers by devious means. Indian tea (even outside Assam) is suffering from the crisis of capitalist 'overproduction'. Dissolution of many tea gardens is clearly on the cards; and this highlights the problem of retrenchment of their labourers. A rapid industrialization may offer some avenues for their reabsorption. One can only draw lessons from a comparable situation in the neighbourhood a few years back. In Naxalbari the first agrarian trouble developed over the question of possession of such tea garden lands which were being disposed of to local farmers and which the garden labourers and local tribals wanted themselves to cultivate.

VARIED LEVELS OF GROWTH

In this section an attempt is made to gauge the levels of growth and associated spatial disparity which confront the planning processes. There has been no attempt to arrive at a comparative estimate of the region's overall growth in terms of the whole of India. The aim simply is to distinguish the relative planes of growth for the constituent units if only to understand the nature and intensity of disparity on micro-regional scale. We have, therefore, purposely refrained from basing our study on any all-India, norm, if it exists at all.

The definitional problem is resolved by referring to the Census of India, 1961, which identified a large number of indices for assessment of levels of regional development.¹⁹ It may be noted that we are concerned with growth as a whole and not only economic growth, though the latter certainly forms the base on which the entire edifice of growth is built. On the other hand, economic growth has not been equated with industrial growth because "the concentration of a large percentage of production in the primary sector is in itself not a cause of poverty; the cause is the low productivity in agriculture."²⁰ The bias in this respect will be clear in the discussion on the indices. We have confined ourselves to a study of growth rather than development, as development involves expansion of an economy plus a qualitative change in the nature of distribution.

The seven political units in north-east India have, among them, 30 districts with sizes varying from just over 3000 to nearly 25,000 square kilometres. The total area of north-east India is about 2.5 lakh square kilometres or 8 per cent of the territory of India containing 3.5 per cent of India's population in 1971. In assessing the growth at district levels, the latest data were available only from the Census of 1961. Moreover, in 1961 Mizo Hills, Garo Hills United Khasi and Jaintia Hills were districts

of Assam while Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and NEFA were union territories. Nagaland was already divided into 3 districts and the others were treated as a whole. Therefore in this study we have taken as units the districts of 1961 Assam (including Meghalaya and Mizoram) and Nagaland. Manipur, Tripura and NEFA have been treated as a whole. Thus we have 17 units to be analyzed. To make the conclusions comparable, even for 1971, north-east India is considered in terms of the same number of units as of 1961.²¹

TABLE I
NORTH EASTERN REGION

State	Name of district	1971	
		Area	Population
Arunachal Pradesh	1 Kameng	13,724	86,001
	2 Lohit	24,427	62,865
	3 Siang	23,723	1,21,936
	4 Subansiri	14,797	99,239
	5 Tirap	6,907	97,470
Assam	1 Cachar	6,962	17,13,318
	2 Darrang	8,775	17,36,188
	3 Goalpara	10,359	22,25,103
	4 Kamrup	9,863	28,54,183
	5 Lakimpur	12,792	21,22,719
	6 Mikir Hills	10,332	3,79,310
	7 North Cachar Hills	4,890	76,047
	8 Nowgong	5,561	16,80,895
	9 Sibsagar	8,989	18,37,389
Manipur	1 Manipur Central	5,605	7,63,260
	2 Manipur East	4,409	62,229
	3 Manipur North	3,417	1,04,175
	4 Manipur South	4,581	98,114
	5 Manipur West	4,344	44,975
Meghalaya	1 Garo Hills	8,084	4,06,615
	2 Jaintia Hills	3,863	6,05,084
	3 Khasi Hills	10,529	
	4 Shillong	13	6,05,084
Mizoram	—	21,087	
Nagaland	1 Kohima	7,209	1,75,204
	2 Mokokchung	3,852	1,68,242
	3 Tuensang	5,466	1,73,003
Tripura	1 North Tripura	3,541	4,05,009
	2 South Tripura	3,577	3,99,728
	3 West Tripura	3,359	7,51,605

NOTE: In 1973 a new district of Dibrugarh was created in Assam taking the total to 10.

It is not the purpose of this study to review the trend of growth in the region on a time scale. The purpose, on the other hand, was to get a picture at any fixed point of time. The preference, naturally, is for a year which would largely express the current situation. It is obvious that the best source of current data could be the Census of 1971. But unfortunately the 1971 Census data are only partially available² at the time of writing and that too for only two states out of seven. Therefore, the study has to be mainly based on the 1961 data with a supplementary note on the available data of 1971 collected from various sources whose authenticity is largely beyond doubt. Non-availability of the last data led to a modification of the original scheme and the authors had to be satisfied with the data representing only the first fourteen years of independent development of the country. Later on in this article, we have tried to indicate the situation as existing in and around 1971. However, based on incomplete data, it is bound to have many weaknesses. For 1971, the final population tables of the Census of India, Indian labour statistics, reports of the fact-finding surveys of nationalized banks, power surveys, Indian agricultural statistics, and annual surveys of industries,²² were consulted. Most of these sources did not contain data below the levels of states. Reorganization of states and creation of new districts continued in the region even after 1971 and as such even 1971 figures cannot give a correct picture of the administrative mosaic as of today.²³ Therefore, we can comment on the 1971 situation only very broadly.

Methodology; Indices and Weightage

We have selected 14 indices to analyze the levels of districtwise growth of north-eastern India.²⁴ Two of these indices refer to agricultural technology, two each to the sectors of organized industry, urbanization, traditional occupations like household industry and retail trade, infrastructure and to literacy, medical facilities, etc. It can be seen that these indices cover the entire gamut of growth rather than only economic growth. The selection of these 14 indices out of a large number of other indices used by Asok Mitra,²⁵ indicates the bias of the paper.

More difficult is the decision on weightage required to be distributed to the indices to work out a single index of growth. In table II we have listed the indices and weighted them nationally after classifying them into three broad categories. The three consolidated indices are further consolidated into one index which is subsequently classified into levels through the method of working out standard deviation.

As can be seen, we have given the highest significance scores to workers in registered factories as per cent of total workers and area under double crop as per cent of net area sown. These two, in the authors' opinion, constitute, in any region of India and more so in the north-east, the most significant indicators of growth, one in the direction of organized industry and the other in agricultural technology. Workers in household industry have been given the lowest score as its significance has been

sidered only marginal. Even density of population per square mile is selected for a higher score value because density certainly reflects capacity of an area to sustain a certain number of people.

In preparing the index of infrastructure growth, more weightage is given to gross area irrigated than to establishments run on electricity or to miles of surfaced roads. This is done with the understanding that in a very underdeveloped region like north-east India, where nearly 88 per cent of the population belongs to the rural category, a growth in the rural sector is one of the basic preconditions for growth in the non-rural sector. In that sense agricultural technology has been imparted higher significance than the other.

TABLE II

GROWTH INDICES

A. Index of Economic Growth, 1961

Order of imparted significance	Items	Weights
1	Workers in registered factories (% of all workers)	6.0
2	Area under double crop (% of net sown area)	5.5
3	Number of registered factories	5.0
4	Urban population (per 1000 of total population)	4.5
5	Number of towns	4.0
6	Density of population (per square mile)	3.5
7	Workers in retail trade (per 1000 of total population)	2.0
8	Workers in household industry (% of total working population)	1.0
B. Index of Infrastructural Growth		
1	Gross area irrigated (% of gross area sown)	2.0
2	Establishments run on electricity (% of all industrial establishments)	1.5
3	Miles of surfaced roads (per 1000 sq. miles of area)	1.0
C. Index of Growth in Literacy, Schools and Medical Institutions		
1	Crude literacy rate (per 1000 of total population)	2.0
2	Schools (per 1000 of all census houses)	1.5
3	Medical institutions (per 1000 of all census houses)	1.0

In the index of growth showing crude literacy rates, schools and medical institutions, literacy has been awarded the highest score. The data on medical institutions possibly include only government institutions and as such do not convey a correct picture. Nevertheless, we included the item as significant though giving it a weightage lower than literacy or schools.

From this discussion it will be obvious that though the order of imparted significance and distribution of weighted score were determined notionally, effort was directed to conform to a scale which could be taken as the norm for most of India.

Measurement of Growth Levels

We have worked out five levels of growth in north-east India as existing in 1961 (Table III). There is only one unit in the highest level (Lakhimpur), two units in level II (Sibsagar and Kamrup), six units in level III (United Khasi and Jaintia Hills,²⁶ Cachar, Goalpara, Darrang, Nowgong and Tripura) five units in level IV (Mizo Hills, Garo, Manipur, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and Kohima) and three units in level V (NEFA,²⁷ Mokokchung and Tuensang).

Table III further makes it clear that:

- a) Tuensang is the most backward of all units and not even comparable with any other unit except (b);
- b) NEFA as a whole and Mokokchung lie close to each other, a little above the lowest;
- c) Kohima and United Mikir and North Cachar Hills can be similarly grouped together above (b);
- d) Manipur, Garo and Mizo Hills constitute a fourth step above (c);
- e) Darrang, Nowgong and Tripura are marked by a gradual decline;
- f) Sibsagar, Kamrup, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Cachar and Goalpara constitute the sixth level; and lastly,
- g) Lakhimpur stands above the rest as the unit which has attained the highest level of growth.

It will be found that the above seven divisions are somewhat different from the five levels worked out in table III. This is because these five levels have been made statistically justifiable.

A breakdown of the composite index would show that in terms of economic growth Lakhimpur stands at the head of all the 17 units under study while Tuensang remains at the bottom. In fact, there is a high degree of correspondence between the economic growth index and the composite growth index for all the districts. The index of infrastructure development reveals that except for five units (Sibsagar, Cachar, Nowgong, Mizo Hills and Garo Hills) the correspondence continues to be high. Nowgong and Garo Hills have better infrastructure development which is ahead of the level (in terms of the regional norm) of economic

TABLE III
COMPOSITE INDEX OF GROWTH, 1961

Class	Serial number of districts	Name of district	Total weighted score value
I	1	Lakhimpur	599.02
			—— S.D.II (554.55)
II	2	Sibsagar	413.55
	3	Kamrup	403.91
			—— S.D.I. (389.37)
III	4	United Khasi and Jaintia Hills	375.79
	5	Cachar	350.44
	6	Goalpara	348.98
	7	Darrang	307.89
	8	Nowgong	278.99
	9	Tripura	248.64
			—— Mean (242.2)
IV	10	Mizo Hills	179.90
	11	Garo Hills	142.18
	12	Manipur	140.71
	13	United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	97.73
	14	Kohima	94.66
			—— (S.D.I. (86.03))
V	15	NEFA	67.51
	16	Mokokchung	54.32
	17	Tuensang	13.10

growth attained by these two units. For Sibsaagar, Cachar and the Mizo Hills, the opposite is true.

The index of growth in literacy, schools and medical institutions, on the other hand, shows that there exists hardly any relationship between this and the composite growth of units. As for example, while the mean for the entire region of the number of schools per 1000 of all census houses, is 8.94, NEFA has as high figure as 13, Mizo Hills and Garo Hills 14 each. The number of medical institutions is of a very high order in NEFA. The mean crude literacy rate for the region is 244.64. The two units, which otherwise stand at a very low level in the composite growth index but show high level of growth in terms of literates per thousand of population, are Mizo Hills (440) and Manipur (304).

The sizes of areas represented by various levels may be summarized as follows:

Level I	5.02 per cent of the total area of the region					
Level II	7.28 per cent	„	„	„	„	„
Level III	22.19 per cent	„	„	„	„	„
Level IV	29.04 per cent	„	„	„	„	„
Level V	36.47 per cent	„	„	„	„	„

The lowest levels of growth are to be found over more than 65 per cent of the total area of the region, while only about 12 per cent lies within the range of the first two levels. This is the agonizing truth as expressed by the census figures of 1961.

1971 Situation

Because of non-availability of corresponding data for 1971 during the exercises, it was necessary to reduce the number of indices from 14 to 10 and change them to suit the available data. Thus, the two indices of workers in registered factories and number of registered factories were replaced by the index of persons engaged in manufacturing industries other than household industries. Similarly, we considered the net area cultivated instead of the irrigated area, dropped the three indices representing schools and medical institutions and establishments run on electricity. These changes introduced in the selection of indices for 1971 were unavoidable in the circumstances, and the effect of these on the composite index for 1971 was moderate. However, the weightage remaining uniform, the ten selected indices give a fairly correct picture of intra-regional disparate growth ten years after 1961, if we remember that though Lakhimpur, Manipur and Tripura have all been placed in level II, Manipur lies at the bottom of the level while Lakhimpur stands at the head with a large difference in total score values. In fact, Manipur lies closer to level III and Lakhimpur very narrowly misses its place in level I.

In 1971 the most significant points to be noted in the order of placings of districts on the growth scale, were:

- 1 Kamrup's ascendancy to the top followed at some distance by Goalpara and Lakhimpur;
- 2 Fairly close positions held by Cachar, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Tripura;
- 3 Manipur, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Kohima lie close to the regional mean;
- 4 Mokokchung, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and Mizoram lie huddled together below (3);
- 5 Garo, Arunachal and Tuensang lie at the bottom.

The changes in relative positions between 1961 and 1971 may have been partly due to the difference in indices between the two years, partly due to the statistical method followed, but also due to certain changes in the economy of the region during the decade.

It may be relevant to examine the positions of the three districts of Assam at the top of the 1971 scale, in regard to some of the indices taken for consideration. These three units are Kamrup, Goalpara and Lakhimpur.

In the percentage variation of urban population between 1961 and 71, Goalpara registered the third highest growth (+68.68%) after Darrang and Sibsagar, followed by Lakhimpur (+67.08%) with Kamrup trailing far behind (+52.69%). In the area under foodgrains, however, Kamrup occupied the leading position in 1966-67 with 434,000 hectares, followed by Goalpara (354,000). Lakhimpur stood at the bottom of all the districts of Assam valley in this respect (201,000).²⁸ In net area sown, Kamrup stood at the top with about 432,00 hectares, followed by Goalpara (335,000) and Lakhimpur occupying a backstage seat with 289,000 hectares. Irrigation in Assam valley is mainly concentrated in these three districts with Goalpara and Lakhimpur leading in canal (*dong*) irrigation and Kamrup in tank irrigation.

Persisting Disparity in Backwardness

Though Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Darrang and Cachar have near-monopoly of the tea plantations, Nowgong is part of the lower Assam valley where the economy is primarily based on rice culture. Gauhati in Kamrup district has been the major centre for industrial activity. The development of manufacturing industries mainly in Gauhati, to cater to the needs of the area and its neighbourhood, has been more conspicuous than in any other part of the valley in the last decade. This is clear from the *Primary Census Abstract of 1971* which showed that Kamrup was far ahead of all other districts of Assam in the total number of workers engaged in manufacturing other than household industries.

The composite index for 1971 (table IV) shows that Arunachal, Tuensang district for Nagaland, Garo Hills and Mizoram hold the lowest positions in the 1971 scale. In Arunachal Pradesh, out of nearly 3000 villages, only about 56 were electrified. For Mizoram this figure was only 5 out of 230, for Meghalaya, 59 out of 4583 and for Manipur, 188. In Arunachal "more than 2000 kms. of motorable roads, besides more than 5000 kms. of porter tracks, bridle paths etc., have so far been constructed and the area has thus been opened up fast. Compared to 1947 figures of only 168 kms. of motorable roads, this is great achievement."²⁹ There has also been a high growth in schools and number of students—from 3 schools with 80 students in 1947 to 566 schools and a college with about 28,000 students now.³¹ Similarly, high growth is recorded in the number of health units and hospitals with a total figure of 123.³² But these indices have not offset the effects of the total impact of all the indices of growth, and Arunachal remains one of the most backward areas of north-east India.

Mizoram is a densely forested area with about 93 per cent of the land under forest cover and only about 2 per cent under cultivation. It is said that Mizoram's backwardness stems from primitive agriculture and destruction of green forests. Whatever may be the reasons, Mizoram today shares with Arunachal, Tuensang and Garo Hills the fate of being one of those areas at the lowest level of growth.

Of the four districts of Meghalaya (including Shillong), the Garo

TABLE IV
COMPOSITE INDEX OF GROWTH, 1971

Class	Serial number of districts	Name of district	Total weighted score value
I	1	Kamrup	435.85
	2	Goalpara	358.27
			+S.D.I. (319.90)
II	3	Lakhimpur	313.62
	4	Cachar	309.72
	5	Darrang	289.86
	6	Nowgong	279.77
	7	Sibsagar	274.53
	8	Tripura	248.50
	9	Manipur	204.10
			Mean (198.35)
III	10	United Khasi & Jaintia Hills	151.91
	11	Kohima	121.68
	12	Mokokchung	101.50
	13	United Mikir and North Cachar Hills	83.89
	14	Mizoram	82.25
			—S.D.I. (77.20)
IV	15	Garo Hills	45.13
	16	Arunachal	37.50
	17	Tuensang	37.20

Hills is comparatively the more backward area. Khasi and Jaintia Hills have still quite an edge over the Garo Hills as can be seen in the composite index of 1971 where the former finds its place at the head of class III, while the latter is included in class IV.⁸⁸ Tuensang in Nagaland holds its position at the bottom in 1971 with the lowest score value.

Intra-regional disparity in growth thus continues to manifest itself rather acutely in north-east India. The four levels of growth worked out for 1971 are as follows:

Level I	7.93 per cent of the total area of the region
Level II	29.77 per cent „ „ „ „ „
Level III	15.95 per cent „ „ „ „ „
Level IV	46.35 per cent „ „ „ „ „

The two lowest levels of growth together constitute about 62.20 per

TABLE V
NORTH-EAST INDIA, 1971 : SOME INDICATORS OF UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

	Brahma- putra Valley	Cachar Hills	Mikir Hills	N.C. Assam	Megha- laya	Aruna- chal	Naga- land	Manipur	Tri- pura	Mizoram
1 Density per km	221	246	37	16	186	45	6	31	48	149
2 Decadal population growth	35.7	24.3	68.3	40.0	34.9	31.5	38.3	40.9	37.5	36.3
3 Tribal population as per- centage of total population	10.7	0.9	55.4	69.2	10.9	80.5	78.3	88.6	31.2	28.9
4 Decadal growth of tribal population	40.9	8.6	24.3	37.7	27.3	23.8	23.8	33.1	34.1	25.0
5 Literacy rate (%)	28.1	30.6	19.2	27.3	28.1	29.5	11.3	27.4	32.9	31.0
6 Urbanization of total population (%)	9.1	7.9	2.7	6.8	8.8	14.5	3.7	9.9	13.2	10.4
7 Percentage of tribal popula- tion urbanized	0.9	—	0.7	1.6	0.9	8.2	0.9	4.5	4.5	1.2
8 Tribals as % of urban popu- lation	1.0	—	14.6	16.0	1.1	45.6	20.1	37.7	10.6	3.4

SOURCE : Worked out from available census data.

NOTE: Tribals constitute 80 per cent of the resident population of both Garo Hills and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The rate of urbanization in the former is 3.8 per cent and in the latter, 21.8 per cent. As to the urbanization of the tribals alone, the respective rates are 2.6 and 12.0 per cent. The literacy rates also are widely divergent.

cent of the total area while the highest level includes only about 7.93 per cent. The persistent domination of intense backwardness over such a vast territory would itself call for special attention.

This study underscores the intensity of intra-regional disparity prevailing in north-east India even after nearly thirty years of independence. And this, in spite of the fact that the region's known resource base is fairly substantial with large reserves of oil, coal, silimanite, limestone, bamboo, and timber distributed over wide areas. So far the emphasis appears to have been mainly on the development of surfaced roads, schools and medical institutions and on cottage industries, like handloom-weaving and sericulture in Nagaland, handloom, handicrafts and khadi in Tripura, handloom and handicrafts in Mizoram, handloom-weaving, sericulture, bamboo and cane articles in Manipur. The situation is no better in the agricultural sector. Upto June 1972, Tripura had only 25 energized pump-sets, and Meghalaya 100. Mizoram had five diesel power stations to generate electricity only for domestic consumption at Aizawl, Lunglei, Kolasib, Serchhip and Hnahthial with nothing left for irrigation. One could venture to say that such disparity is at the root of many tensions affecting the life in this part of India. It is one thing to declare that such disparities should end but quite another to act so that they diminish rather than get ever more intensified.

THE ETHNIC-LINGUISTIC COMPLEX

As seen earlier, before 1947, the intra-regional economic links were rather weak. Because of partition and consequent sapping of the traditional communication links, different parts of the region have however increasingly become interdependent in respect of communications and trade channels, with Gauhati emerging as the entrepot. Thus north-east India, though politically divided, is today a distinct and integrated economic region which it never was before 1947.

In the colonial period, a limited economic development had taken place in the plains as well as the Khasi Hills, but not in the hill areas in general. Later, after independence, economic development has been visualized on a wider scale for the whole region. In the given situation, such a development naturally involves some degree of territorial redistribution of population, which has its own hazards. In a labour-short, skill-poor and land-abundant region like north-east India, migrants from other areas might be welcome from the strictly economic point of view. Nevertheless an open-door policy towards them might at the same time be unwise, from other points of view. Particularly so, when in a small linguistic sub-region, such migration leads to the danger of the local community (linguistic or tribal) being culturally swamped or outnumbered by another dominant and numerous community. Even if this tendency is inevitable through a prolonged historical process, it is not desirable as a short-run goal or destiny. For, such a situation creates a degree of social tension that

would defeat the goal of economic development itself. The crucial task is therefore to direct our efforts in identifying the distinct linguistic-tribal (regional and sub-regional) units, as well as the rights to be enjoyed by minority groups in these units and to see that the feeling of neighbourliness extends over as large an area as possible.

Little and Great Nationalism

With this approach we have tried to understand the relative positions of various linguistic groups in north-east India and to discuss problems inherent in the given situation. Today the only way to de-emphasize the differences in religion, castes as well as the tribal exclusiveness in India is to realize the importance of cohesion of respective regional communities. In the very process of this being achieved, regional communities such as in Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam will also feel themselves to be parts of the bigger Indian society. There is no political-administrative or military short-cut to this end. Indian nationalism and the associated process of state-formation are still in the making. Two simultaneous forces are at work: little nationalism, helping the formation of local linguistic communities through the dissolution of castes, tribes and religious groupism; and great nationalism, fostering unity on an all-India plane. These forces are intertwined and are destined to converge upon each other.

Any pattern of economic development, capitalistic or otherwise, forces peoples to intermingle and create new mixed societies in the place of erstwhile stagnant societies. Even with marginal doses of development, during the colonial period, this had already happened to some extent, more in the plains than in the hills.

The resultant population-mix could be fairly comprehended with a reference to the linguistic composition of the population in each state and to the ratio of the tribal to the resident population. Besides, the place-of-birth data, as recorded by the census authorities, also fairly indicate its current exposure to immigration from outside. The latest language data of 1971 are available only for the fourteen major Indian languages. These are presented in table VI.

Table VI is revealing. Had the whole region been politically organized as a single state, the Brahmaputra valley, its heartland, would have dominated its politics; and Assamese, spoken by 46 per cent of the region's population, would have surely claimed for itself a special official status as the first language. Bengali also would have emerged as a dominant language of the state, second only to Assamese. However, the cultural and political aspirations of smaller linguistic groups and, above all, the Bengali-Assamese conflict came in the way. Such a situation was avoided through suitable constitutional and administrative arrangements. Most of the linguistic groups, living in compact areas, have been provided with a fair degree of autonomy for the fulfilment of their respective political and cultural aspirations. This response to little nationalism is not inconsistent with loyalty to great nationalism. Both indeed can be

TABLE VI
LINGUISTIC GROUPS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA, 1971

	Assam- Mizoram	Manipur	Meghalaya	Nagaland	Tripura	Arunachal	Total
							(Population in 000s)
1 Assamese	8905	2	23	7	—	14	8951
2 Bengali	2907	15	94	9	1071	24	4119
3 Hindi-Urdu	751	10	14	15	23	11	824
	12563 (89.9)	27 (2.5)	131 (12.9)	30 (5.8)	1093 (70.3)	50 (10.6)	13894 (71.0)
4 Oriya	150	—	—	1	14	1	166
5-8 South Indian languages	29	2	1	3	2	4	41
9-14 Other all-India languages	16	2	3	2	1	4	27
	12,758 (85.3)	31 (2.9)	135 (13.4)	35 (6.8)	1110 (71.3)	58 (12.5)	14,128 (72.1)
1-14 Languages not recognized by eighth schedule	2 200(14.7)	42(97.1)	876(86.6)	481(93.2)	446(28.7)	410(87.5)	5,454(72.9)
Total population	14958(100)	1073(100)	1012(100)	516(100)	1556(100)	468(100)	19,582(100)

NOTES: 1 Languages covered by the last row are mostly local ones.

2 Figures in brackets are percentages in relation to population of each state.

SOURCE: India: *Pocket Book of Population Statistics*, Census Centenary, New Delhi 1972.

accommodated in a federal structure, as the recent Kashmir model suggests.

The problems related to ethnicity and linguism may now be discussed state by state. The pattern of linguistic social conflict in each state is related not only to the number of language groups and their relative sizes, but also to the degree of relatedness and distinction among them. The co-existence of closely-related Bengali and Assamese communities in Assam has given rise to a fierce rivalry that has so far defied solution. Historical reasons apart, the tagging of Bengali-speaking Cachar to Assamese-speaking Brahmaputra valley in the same state, with Assamese declared as the official language and the sole vernacular medium of university education, has complicated the issue. Even in the Brahmaputra valley, the historically evolved homeland of the Assamese people, a high degree of population admixture has already taken place, as is indicated by the following summary table:

TABLE VII
LINGUISTIC GROUPS IN THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY, 1971

Assamese	Bengali	Hindi	(Population in 000s)	
			Other	Total
1,836	1,494	558	1,541	12,456
(71)	(12)	(4)	(13)	(100)

NOTE: According to birthplace data of 1961, persons born outside the state constituted only 12 per cent of the valley population in that year. Half of them were born in former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The census, it may be noted, accepts only the declaration of a person with regard to his religion or language.

Languages, Tribes and Immigrants

Because of continuous migration into the valley and the emergence of a distinct identity of the plains tribals, about thirty per cent of the valley population have their loyalty to languages other than Assamese. In the districts of Cachar, North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills, Bengali, Bodo-Kachari (Dimasa) and Mikir are numerically the respective dominant languages. But, as in the Brahmaputra valley, there are in these areas other linguistic groups as well. In the combined Mikir and North Cachar Hills, for instance, while 47.7 per cent spoke Mikir, 14.2 per cent spoke the Bodo-Kachari group of languages, 8.4 per cent Bengali, 7.8 per cent Assamese and 3.3 per cent Hindi in 1961. In Cachar, 78.8 per cent spoke Bengali and 10 per cent Hindi.

In Tripura, 68.9 per cent of the population returned Bengali as their mother-tongue in 1971. Tripuri, which was numerically the dominant language of the state a century back, is today spoken by an insignificant minority. In 1961, Tripuri-speakers constituted about 10 per cent of the population and today even less. What happened in Tripura over the decades is a pointer to what would have happened in other regional units in the absence of protection.

The relative size of various groups in the population-mix is a function of large-scale migrations over the years. It appears that such large-scale migrations as had taken place in the past, have reached their near-saturation point. The table below shows the percentage share of immigrants in the 1961 population-mix of different areas. It reveals that such persons constituted only a small fraction of the respective populations in 1961. The proportion has presumably decreased by 1971.

TABLE VIII

TRIBES AND IMMIGRANTS, 1961

	Scheduled tribes as percentage of total population	Immigrants as percentage of total population
Garó Hills	85.6	4.0
Khasi-Jaintia	81.4	9.7
Mikir-N.C. Hills	75.5	9.0
Mizoram	98.1	6.0
Manipur	31.9	2.35

NOTE: Immigrants in the first four units here are defined as those born outside the state of Assam, as constituted in 1961, except for Manipur.

Integration of a Plural Society

The provision of the sixth schedule in the constitution has proved to be an effective device in limiting the exposure to migration in the areas, so scheduled. In 1961, 77.4 per cent of the Garó Hills population recorded Garó as their mother-tongue. Bengali (including dialects)—the second important language—was spoken by only 9.4 per cent of the population there. In the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Khasi (including dialects) was spoken by 75.7 per cent of the population, while Bengali—the second important language—was spoken by only 6.9 per cent of the population. In Mizoram, 79.2 per cent of the population spoke the Mizo language and 7 per cent Bengali. Perhaps the extension of the sixth schedule provision to demarcate tribal areas in Tripura and Brahmaputra valley in some form or other would go a long way in restraining the social and linguistic conflicts. However it would not be easy to do so because of the highly mixed character of the concerned populations. For example, the government miserably failed to implement the provision of tribal belts in the Brahmaputra valley, which it was legally committed to since 1948.

Patterns of language division and associated problems widely vary over the region from state to state. In Assam, it is the Assamese-Bengali rivalry that dominates the scene. Besides, the demand recently raised for a Bodo-Kachari homeland is an added complication. There is, except one (Jonai), no police thana in the Assam plains where the Bodo-Kacharis, or even all the plains tribals taken together, constitute a majority. Hence,

the demand is self-defeating. However, it is hoped that an effective implementation of minority language rights in the present state of Assam would help promote integrative behaviour on the part of its multilingual population.

In Tripura, the key question that has emerged is the protection of the Tripuris and other tribes—their lands, language and culture. Meghalaya has emerged, by and large, as a bilingual state, where Khasis are relatively more urbanized and advanced than the Garos. Unless resolved through suitable institutional provisions, Garo-Khasi conflict may develop in future on the lines of the Assamese-Bengali conflict. In Manipur, the dominant Manipuri-speaking population (64.5 per cent) is concentrated in the central valley and is mostly Hindu. The remaining people are tribal hill-dwellers and mostly Christian. The conflict there is many-sided. The problem of migrants is rather small in this state.

In Nagaland and Mizoram, a major part of the emergent little nationalism has not yet compromised with great nationalism. Nagaland is relatively free of any language conflict, for no particular local language is yet dominant there. In 1961, 15 per cent of the population spoke Ao, 13 per cent Sema, 13 per cent Konyak and 9 per cent Angami. Nagamese—an artificial language based on Assamese—was historically evolved as a common link language. Nevertheless, the possibility of deliberate political efforts in creating a common Naga language on the basis of one of the Naga languages cannot be ruled out. In Arunachal, too, the situation is not yet very clear, since local languages have only begun to take written forms. In Mizoram, the immigration of Bengali-speaking Chakma tribe—mostly Buddhist—has led to social tension of a serious kind.

The limited scope of this article however does not permit a detailed analysis of the problems arising out of the language situation. These problems are further complicated by the uneven development of the region, particularly in its economic aspects. A glance at table V will indicate the implications of this unevenness. Only by removing this unevenness can we look forward to an integrative behaviour pattern on the part of the region's plural society. The writings of V I Lenin and J V Stalin on the national question and the experience of the USSR offer us some guidelines in this respect.

[Authors, belonging to the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, acknowledge debt to their colleagues, Barun De, Arabinda Biswas, Keya Deb and Nirmala Banerjee for their advice and comments on the first draft of the paper. Swapan Bardhan, Amitabh Krishna and Rita Banerjee assisted in preparing the tables in the paper which originally bore the title 'Regionalization and Integrated Economic Development of North-east India'.]

¹ *Approach to the Fifth Five Year Plan, 1974-79*. Government of India, Planning Commission, January 1973.

² Enrid Alayev, "Regional Planning", *Social Sciences*, 4, 6, 12, 1974. He says:

- "In other words, apart from intricate economic, social and political problems which are general in nature, the colonial era has left the peoples of the young independent states a whole skein of regional problems which demand urgent solution". (p 157)
- ³ Alayev, *op. cit.*, pp 156-57.
 - ⁴ *Ibid.*, p 155.
 - ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 155-56.
 - ⁶ K Marx and F Engels, *Selected Works*, Moscow 1969. Vol I, p 21: "how far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried."
 - ⁷ J R Meyer, "Regional Economics: A Survey" in L Needleham (Ed.), *Regional Analysis*, Penguin, 1968, p 23. Meyer further writes: "In fact, all regional classification schemes are simply variations on the homogeneity criterion and it is somewhat misleading to suggest otherwise."
 - ⁸ Alayev, *op. cit.*, p 161.
 - ⁹ *Ibid.*, p 157.
 - ¹⁰ In the USSR where regional planning has achieved the greatest ever success, constitution of the political units has been based on economic as well as ethnic considerations. See N M Kovyazin, "Peculiarities of Economic Regionalization in the Ethnic Areas of the Soviet North", reproduced in *Soviet Geography: Review and Translation*. American Geographical Society, New York, June 1974.
 - ¹¹ See Shibani Kinker Chaube, *Hill Politics in Northeast India*, Calcutta 1973.
 - ¹² O H K Spate, A T A Learnmouth and B H Farmer, *India, Pakistan and Ceylon: The Regions*, London 1972, paperback print, pp 407-08.
 - ¹³ See *Assam: Some Aspects of Her Problems*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Assam, Shillong 1971.
 - ¹⁴ R P Misra, K V Sundaram, V L S Prakasa Rao, *Regional Development Planning in India: A New Strategy*, Delhi 1974, p 186.
 - ¹⁵ W W Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth*, 2nd edition, Cambridge 1971, p 58.
 - ¹⁶ See Misra et al, *op. cit.*, pp 183-84.
 - ¹⁷ On 21 February 1975, the West Bengal Chief Minister told the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry that in the British period 90 per cent of industry in the eastern region was owned by foreign capital. Afterwards they were grabbed by the Indian monopolists who have retained a dominant position whereas local enterprise is still shy. See the *Statesman*, 22 February 1975.
 - ¹⁸ See, for example, P C Goswami (Ed.), *Socio-Economic Research in Tribal Areas: Papers Discussed in a Seminar at Jorhat in February 1970*, Agro-Economic Research Centre for North East India, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat 4, Assam; S Bose, *Carrying Capacity of Land under Shifting Cultivation*, Calcutta 1967; and J B Ganguli, *Economic Problems of the Jhumias of Tripura*, Calcutta 1969.
 - ¹⁹ *Census of India, 1961*, Vol I, India, Part I-A (ii): Levels of Regional Development in India.
 - ²⁰ Gerald M Meier, *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, Oxford University Press, 1970, p 6.
 - ²¹ See table I, for list of districts.
 - ²² *Census of India 1971 Series I—India*, Paper I of 1972—Final Population 1972 (also *General Population Tables 1971*, of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh)
Indian Labour Statistics 1968, 1969, 1973, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation, Government of India, 1968, 1969, 1973.
Reports of Fact-finding Surveys on Lakhimpur, Nowgong and Sibsagar districts of Assam and Manipur, United Bank of India, 1971-72.
Seventh Annual Electric Power Survey of India, Central Electricity Authority, 1972.
Indian Agricultural Statistics, 1966-67, 1967-68, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of India, 1973.

Annual Survey of Industries, 1968, Central Statistical Organization, Government of India, 1971.

- ²³ For the preparation of the tables a questionnaire was sent to the government of each state and union territory. Only the Government of Tripura has kindly replied. The Mizo district of Assam was made a union territory on 21 January 1972. NEFA was transformed into Arunachal Pradesh with 5 districts; Tripura with 3 districts, Manipur with 5 districts and Meghalaya (which was part of Assam with 2 districts) with 4 districts became full-fledged states as a result of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971. See *India 1974*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, pp 330-371.
- ²⁴ The indices are: (a) density of population (persons per square mile), (b) area under double crop (p. c. of n. s. a.), (c) gross area irrigated (p. c. of gross area sown), (d) workers in household industries (p. c. of total working population), (e) workers in registered factories (p. c. of all workers), (f) number of registered factories, (g) workers in retail trade (per 1000 of total population), (h) establishments run on electricity (p. c. of all industrial establishments), (i) urban population (per 1000 of total population), (j) number of towns, (k) crude literacy rate (per 1000 of total population), (l) schools (per 1000 of all census houses), (m) medical institutions (per 1000 of all census houses), (n) miles of surfaced roads (per 1000 square miles of area).
- ²⁵ *Census of India, 1961, op. cit.*
- ²⁶ Until 1972 the Khasi-Jaintia Hills excluding the portion formerly known as British Shillong constituted the autonomous United Khasi-Jaintia Hills district while the former British Shillong was called the Khasi and Jaintia district. The census did not acknowledge the difference and put the two districts under one head: United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district. The inclusion of Shillong, the state-capital, in the census district is largely responsible for the inflated figures of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.
- ²⁷ R L Singh (Ed.) *India, a Regional Geography*, Benares Hindu University, 1971, p 329.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p 333.
- ²⁹ In this article all references to NEFA and Northeast Frontier concern the territory now comprising Arunachal Pradesh.
- ³⁰ K A Raja, "Prospect of Economic Growth of Arunachal Pradesh and Fifth Five Year Plan", *North-East Affairs*, Vol 2, No 4, 1974, p 24.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p 25.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ See table IV.
- ³⁴ For details see A Guha, "Immigrants and Autochthones in a Plural Society: Their Inter-relations in the Brahmaputra Valley in Historical Perspective," unpublished paper, submitted at a seminar held during 10-12 March 1975, at the Department of Sociology, Dibrugarh University.

PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Bengal: Rise and Growth of a Nationality

THIS ARTICLE deals with certain issues pertaining to the national question in India in relation to political-economic developments in Bengal before 1947. I begin by introducing certain concepts and a framework of analysis without an elaborate theoretical discussion.¹ The nation-state was built in western Europe in the era of capitalism. In its historical archetype, it emerged out of feudalism in the course of a national movement led by a rising bourgeoisie and culminating in the bourgeois revolution. It was a movement which reflected the demands of a bourgeois class seeking to assume control of state power as well as of the home market, both defined territorially. In fact, a national movement, insofar as it is a bourgeois movement, has as its objective the creation of a sovereign nation state.

This political movement is necessarily armed with a political ideology—a nationalism, which identifies its supporters and its opponents. It is this range of support which defines the nation, that is those on whose behalf the bourgeoisie claims to lead the struggle. Hence, the specific identification of a nation by its proponents is dependent entirely upon the nature and strength of the class which leads a national movement, its expected sources of support, its opponents and the specific historical context within which the struggle has to be carried on.

There are two distinct paths of capitalist development and industrial revolution in the archetypal bourgeois nation-states. In one, capitalism develops on the basis of small units of industrial production and the abolition of rent as the predominant mode of extraction of the surplus from agriculture. As in England, Holland and Switzerland, there is only a minimal need for state intervention in the sphere of production; the state thus assumes an apparent position of neutrality in regard to all issues of conflict arising out of the development of capitalist relations of production. The second way of development followed by the later capitalist nations such as Germany or Japan proceeds on the basis of positive state initiative in production so as to carry the economy forward towards the path of industrial revolution.

In the first way, the capture of state power by the bourgeoisie is followed by its attempt to extend its hegemony over all structures of society, including its ideological-cultural superstructure. It does this by separating the two realms of the state and civil society (*gesellschaft*). It declares all distinctions of birth, rank, language, race or religion, to be non-political distinctions; it declares the state to be neutral with respect to such distinctions.² At the same time, the bourgeoisie, through the various civil social institutions (family, cultural associations, communications media, and particularly the educational system which, in bourgeois society becomes the most influential part of the ideological state apparatus) seeks to diffuse its own individualistic world-view over the rest of society: an individualistic world-view which, again, seeks to de-emphasize cultural distinctions within society. In the second way of capitalism, because of direct participation of the state in the system of production, the bourgeoisie is unable to achieve this separation between the state and civil society.

Driving Forces

In either case, however, the bourgeoisie seeks to create a cultural homogeneity within the nation-state. In the first way, this is achieved by the diffusion and legitimization of the new "rationalist" ideology of the liberal democratic state; in the second way, the bourgeoisie has necessarily to depend upon the older ideological structures of a cultural community historically developed since precapitalist times.

This community (*gemeinschaft*), already possessing a distinct and common cultural identity in the precapitalist era, we will call a nationality. This cultural identity of a nationality contains elements such as a distinct language, a distinct literary and aesthetic tradition, perhaps a distinct material culture (reflected in, for instance, food habits, clothing and festivals) perhaps certain common religious practices at the level of folk culture. It is possible, but not strictly necessary, that in the course of development of such a nationality a unified feudal state or an organized religious tradition served to consolidate the culture of the community but once created, it is necessary that these cultural foundations be strong

enough to survive the collapse of such a feudal state or organized religion.³

In its classical form, the nationalism which accompanied first-way capitalism initially grew out of one nationality (say, the English). Later, depending upon the economic-political strength of the bourgeoisie and its corresponding ideological sway over the people, that is, its hegemony over civil society, the concept of the nation could include other nationalities (such as the Welsh, the Scottish or the Irish) since the new rational-liberal ideology could afford to dispense with the older ideological notions of cultural communities. For second-way capitalist countries (such as Germany or Japan), the weakness of the bourgeoisie meant a corresponding weakness of the rational-liberal ideology and reliance upon concepts of nationality, "national traditions" and, "national spirit". The nation here had to be defined very exclusively in terms of a nationality. Consequently, it was virtually impossible for second-way capitalist countries to be "multi-national".

Nationalisms upto the later nineteenth century generally fall into the classical archetype described above. With the age of competitive capitalist imperialism and the incorporation of virtually the entire world into the sphere of the capitalist world economy, there grew up nationalisms of a different genre altogether. The crucial concept here is that of the uneven development of capitalism.

'Third World' Nationalism

When there is perceptible uneven development within the political boundaries of a nation-state, including its dependencies, and the lines of division between the developed and backward regions, or more precisely, peoples, (it is not necessarily true that uneven development is always perceived in terms of geographical areas) are perceived along the lines of division between the ethno-cultural communities of nationality, there is the growth of separatist national movements. It is important to note the difference between this kind of nationalism which arises out of a perception of uneven development within the realm of capitalism, and the earlier kind of nationalism which represented the first consolidation of bourgeois nation-states out of feudalism.⁴

It is also important to emphasize that the crucial concept in analyzing twentieth-century nationalism, in countries of the so-called third world, is the uneven development of capitalism. It is not necessarily true that all nationalisms in these countries are primarily antithetical to imperialism. There are three tendencies to be considered here. In the first place, because of uneven development, the leading class, that is, the bourgeoisie of the backward nationality is necessarily weak. In most colonial situations in fact, it is the indigenous big traders and the uppermost layers of the professional classes dependent upon the colonial system who start the national movement in order to secure better terms of trade or employment. The fact that the leading class is weak and to a large extent dependent upon the imperial power or, in a larger sense, the world capitalist

economy, explains the various compromises this class will make with the imperial powers abroad as well as with feudalism at home.

Secondly, a colonized country very often consisted more than one clearly identifiable nationality. Now, because of their imperial connections the economic and political interests of the first nationalists usually ranged throughout the territorial span of the entire country generating a nationalism which was "multinational". However, with the spread of nationalist consciousness among wider strata of the population, the inevitable lopsidedness of colonial economic development in large-sized dependencies could well create an awareness of uneven development even within the peoples of the colonized country. This would give rise to separatist nationalism aimed not so much against the foreign imperialist, but against the allegedly more advanced ethno-cultural community in the colony as expressed in the demand for Pakistan.

Thirdly, even after the victory of a separatist nationalism and the creation of a sovereign nation-state, the persistence or growth of uneven development in a multinational situation could produce a new separatist nationalism, with clearly identifiable oppressing and oppressed nationalities even without the objective foundations of imperialism within the nation-state, as exemplified by Bangladesh.

It should be realized that this framework is designed only to analyze and *explain* national movements. The question of identifying progressive or regressive tendencies in such nationalisms, and the corresponding question of deciding which movements are worthy of support from the standpoint of the capture of state power by the oppressed classes require an entirely different set of criteria and a different mode of analysis.

NATIONALITIES TAKE SHAPE

It is between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries that one notices the development of the different nationalities in different regions of the Indian subcontinent. Niharranjan Ray identifies these as distinct "cultural-ecological zones" and, doubtless keeping in mind his basic perspective of a single Indian "nation", describes this development of distinct cultural communities as "regionalism".⁵ However, he gives sufficient indication as to the elements constituting the cultural distinctness of these "regions" for us to be able to relate this phenomenon to our concept of precapitalist nationalities. First the collapse of the Gupta empire was followed by the establishment of several ruling dynasties whose visions of political and military power rarely transcended their limited regional boundaries. Secondly, from the eighth century onwards the hitherto common denominator of Indian art is replaced, in varying degrees in various regions, by what is termed local or regional schools of art.

Thirdly, by the twelfth century there is the development of mutually distinguishable scripts (proto-Nagari, proto-Bengali, proto-Gujarati and others) and by the fifteenth century the scripts of our modern northern and western Indian languages are all but fully evolved. By the fourteenth

century, nearly all modern Indian languages had been formed and had started producing creative literatures of their own. In fact, there was by this time distinctly regional traditions of artistic and literary aesthetics: "...from about the fourteenth century, India's cultural endeavours have been in the main centred round the regional languages and literatures, not round Sanskrit or Persian except in isolated cases..."⁶ Finally, there even grew up distinct patterns of caste and kinship organizations in each of these ecological-cultural areas characterized by its own regional language.

Bengali Cultural Community

The development of the Bengali nationality, too, occurs roughly in this period. Notwithstanding the divisive pulls of independent feudal lords and chieftains characteristic of all feudal political structures, the definite political consolidation of the region under several independent dynasties—a process growing steadily under the Pala-Sena dynasties to reach full proportions under the independent sultans—certainly aided the consolidation of the people of Bengal as a distinct cultural community. The Bengali language and literature, with its own distinct aesthetic ideals and traditions greatly influenced by the spread of Gauriya Vaishnavism, constituted the basic cultural medium. Alongside there also grew up a distinctive Bengali tradition in art and architecture. Finally, the community also came to possess a distinct set of social institutions: its local pattern of caste structure, its own rituals and code of social conduct embodied in its own laws of inheritance.

What is important to note in this early phase of the history of the Bengali people is the fact that whereas the basic character of the society was obviously agricultural, for a period of about four centuries Bengali merchants carried on a flourishing sea trade. The conquest of the eastern seas by the Arabs in the eighth century, however, led to a precipitate decline in this trade. In consequence, there was a clearly discernible fall in the political power and social standing of the mercantile community in Bengal. "In the fifth and sixth centuries we find one class enjoying as a matter of course the support of the state, namely the artisans, bankers and traders. We know that they were the chief producers of wealth; consequently, it was only natural that the state should support them."⁷ From the eighth century onwards, however, the situation is completely changed.

It is an indubitable fact that from the eighth century onwards Bengal did not have any significant role in the external sea trade of India, and although there was some dominance in internal trade, the merchants and traders did not on this account continue to enjoy their earlier influence and authority over state and society. From the eighth century Bengali society is increasingly forced to depend upon its agriculture, and it is the agriculturists who come into the forefront of social life. At the same time, the power of the trading and mercantile classes is largely reduced.⁸

With the establishment in the sixth and seventh centuries of a feudal structure based on ownership of land and the spread of Brahminism and its associated ideology and culture,

the relations of the state were strengthened with two classes—one the different strata of landowners, the other the majority of the *literati* i. e., the Brahmins... With the decline of manufacturing, trade and commerce in the eighth century these ties of mutual interest between the state and the landowning classes were further strengthened... Though the Pala and Chandra dynasties were Buddhist... the Brahmins were a powerful force in both these states. In the realm of the Sena-Varmana dynasties their power and authority increased further, and the alliance between feudalism and Brahminism was firmly established.⁹

CLASSES IN 19th CENTURY BENGAL

This phenomenon of the absence among the Bengali people of a wealthy mercantile and trading community was something which continued right up to the period of British domination and conquest. Throughout the Mughal period, the most prominent figures in the inland trade of Bengal, as well as those connected with the overseas trade from ports like Sonargaon or Saptagram, were Punjabis or Gujaratis. The wealthiest bankers were also from northern and western India.

With the expansion of the European trade, however, one section of the artisans of Bengal did achieve a measure of prosperity: those who manufactured commodities which were in demand in the new European markets, particularly textiles. In the eighteenth century, there grew up prosperous manufacturing centres around the British, French or Dutch residencies in different parts of Bengal. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, however, a process of massive deindustrialization had started, and by the end of the century, its effects were far more destructive than in any other part of India.

Consequently, the potentialities for the growth of a Bengali capitalist class, which were virtually non-existent before the European connection because of the absence of a wealthy traditional mercantile community of any significant size, received its death-blow with the complete ruination of the traditional artisan class.

At the same time, the management of the agrarian system of Bengal and the series of legislations imposed upon it by the British, undoubtedly with the basic motive of establishing a profitable and secure source of revenue, strengthened the bases of a proliferating class of landed gentry with an almost uniquely unproductive orientation. This was the core of an expanding class of the famous Bengali *bhadralok*, about whose clannishness, quarrelsomeness, cunning, pettiness and other sundry vices so much is being written today by historians and sociologists. The point, however, is not that they were a "traditional elite" who had "modernized" and thereby adapted themselves to a new system of power and patronage. As

a class, they were entirely the product of the process of colonial development. *Compradore* when the chief business of the English was to export commodities out of Bengal, these were the people who had played only a secondary role under the system of the Company's monopoly trade, and with all avenues for alternative investment closed, they directed their newly acquired wealth to the purchase of land. 'After the declaration of free trade, and a brief period of some productive investment of native capital in the 1830s,¹ the entire direction of English trade was reversed: while the Indian manufacturing industry was destroyed, the home market was now flooded with British manufactures, and the subordinate position of a 'dependent bourgeoisie' was perpetuated.

Landowning Rentiers

The landed proprietors of the early nineteenth century were big zamindars with enormous estates. Many of them had residences in the city of Calcutta. By the middle of the century, however, began a process of distinct differentiation within the class of landed proprietors. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, we notice the almost infinite subdivision and diffusion of the landed interest in Bengal. In 1882 there came to exist as many as 110,456 estates in Bengal, of which only 0.41 per cent were larger than 20,000 acres, 11.1 per cent ranged from 500 to 20,000 acres, while as much as 88.4 per cent of the estates were smaller than 500 acres.¹⁰ One reason for this was the splitting of estates through inheritance. But this was not all. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, there occurred the subdivision and diffusion of the proprietary interest in land. Just one scrap of data will indicate this trend: between the Bengal census figures of 1921 and 1931, one notices that the number of landlords and rent-receivers increased by as much as 62 per cent while that of cultivating owners or tenants decreased by 34 per cent.¹¹ And it must be mentioned here that the 1931 figures exclude from the category of rent-receivers those who are rentiers only as a "subsidiary occupation".

Indeed, the situation was such that as the prices of agricultural commodities increased steadily throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, and as commercial crops, particularly jute, were introduced on a major scale, there occurred a sizable gap between the fixed revenue payable by the zamindar to the treasury and the value of the rent which could be efficiently extracted from the actual cultivator. This gap served as the basis of assets into which flowed the savings of the Bengali "middle class," people with small amounts of capital acquired through inheritance, dowry, profits from petty trade or commerce, or savings from professional incomes. Left with no other profitable means for investing this capital, they bought intermediary rights in land which guaranteed a small but nevertheless secure rent income. Hence the much discussed phenomenon of subinfeudation, which in some districts like Bakarganj reached the amazing scale of 15 or 16

distinct levels of intermediary rights between the zamindar and the *raiyat*.

From the last decades of the nineteenth century, provincial politics in Bengal was dominated by this class of intermediate proprietors in land. The Indian Association was set up in 1876 to voice the interests of precisely this class. This was also the stratum of society from which came the early generation of successful professionals in law, journalism, teaching and the civil service. In their role as rentiers, their interests were territorially provincial and ideologically conservative. They were concerned with the legal protection of their proprietary rights for which they had to influence the course of provincial legislation on agrarian matters. The Indian Association, for instance, was one of the principal organizations representing this interest of the non-agriculturist and non-cultivating proprietors and tenants.¹²

Intermediate Proprietors

In their role as professionals, however, they had developed a range of interest which was all-India in scope : as members of the legal profession or the civil service or as teachers they would envisage as their province the law courts, the administrative machinery or the growing educational system all over the country. In this role, therefore, they could associate with similar professionals from Bombay or Madras or Allahabad in an all-India forum such as the Indian National Congress.¹³

In terms of the economy, this leading class in Bengal lived entirely on "revenue"; only the distribution of the surplus concerned them, they had no role in its creation. The rift between the older zamindars and the intermediate proprietors-cum-professionals was a differentiation within the same class of landowning rentiers. There was, however, another dynamic trend in the agrarian economy of Bengal which came to have a major influence upon Bengal's politics in the twentieth century. We have noted earlier the process of subinfeudation of the landed interest in the nineteenth century. This was not, however, a process restricted only to intermediary rights of proprietorship above the legally recognized *raiyat*. As long as there was a sizable difference between the rent payable by the *raiyat* to his superior landlord and the rent which could be extracted from an under-tenant (whatever be the legal status of this tenancy, increasingly this became a system of sharecropping), there was every incentive for the *raiyat* to lease out his holdings rather than have them cultivated by hired labour. This was particularly true for those *raiyats* who held tenurial rights where the rent was fixed by law. This process of constant proliferation of tiers of rent-receivers above the actual cultivator was made economically viable by the fact of an abject scarcity of land in relation to the abundance of labour having no other means of livelihood except agriculture. There was the additional factor of the active policy of the British-owned industries of the Calcutta region to recruit labour from Bihar or the United Provinces in order to keep down wages and prevent the growth of trade unions led by local politicians. This prevented any possible outlet for the

surplus labour in Bengal's agricultural sector. Consequently it became more lucrative for this richer section of the peasantry to dissociate itself from actual cultivation and turn to moneylending and grain trade.

Notwithstanding innumerable proclamations of concern for the cultivator, from both official as well as "national" forums of opinion, no amount of tenancy legislation could stop this process of the gradual transfer of land to the non-cultivating owner. The crucial malady lay in the unwillingness of all vested interests to define the occupancy raiyat in terms of his role in cultivation. Such were the stakes which the lowest rungs of the Bengali middle class had developed in subinfeudation and rent income. Consequently, controversy hinged merely around the length of time a piece of land is occupied continuously that would give the raiyat rights against eviction or increase of rent. No one was prepared to tie occupancy rights to actual cultivation.

Jotdars

Unlike the intermediary proprietor, however, the basis of the economic interests of this rich peasant turned non-cultivating landlord-cum-usurer (the most common term for this class in Bengal, despite several local variations in meaning and nomenclature, is *jotdar*) was not in the main a legal right of proprietorship. His economic gains depended far more on his social standing in the village, on the innumerable extra-legal ties of dominance and bondage with his sharecroppers and debtors, on the potential threats of eviction, or even of sheer terror, with which he could exact far more than the agreed share of the produce or charge exorbitant rates of interest, all entirely outside the pale of the law. His chief interest was, in other words, political power in its most fundamental sense, at the village level.

Certain superstructural developments must now be tied up here. To analyze the history of development, and isolate the major elements of the ideology of the Bengali middle class is, in the limited space available here, extremely difficult. The task has been complicated by historians who, by characterizing this class as an "elite group", have sought to emphasize the determining role of the attitudes and social behaviour of this group to the exclusion of more basic structural features of the economy and society. It needs to be repeated once again that as a class this so-called "elite" group was entirely a product of the conditions imposed under colonialism. The system of land tenure, combined with the disincentive to the entry of domestic savings into native industrial enterprises and the destruction of indigenous manufacturing, created the basic economic structure from which emerged a class of rent-receivers totally divorced from, and entirely uninterested in, the conditions of social production. Added to this were the new opportunities opened up to precisely this class of people by the expansion of the judicial, administrative and educational apparatus of the country. The fact that higher education, in the English language and solely as a means of entry into a white collar job or a profession, remained

confined largely to the same group of people only replicated in the cultural sphere the enormous distance of this group from the sphere of social production.

This entire complex of economic and cultural forces, producing a class enjoying pre-eminent authority over society and polity yet dissociated from its productive system, centred around the metropolitan life of Calcutta. The political structure of British India gave Calcutta a rather unique position in the political life of the province. The formal representative institutions did not even touch the vast mass of the rural population and all major forums of "national" opinion in Calcutta were dominated by representatives of this class. Consequently, it is not surprising that they could claim to exercise political leadership over the entire province without being able, and indeed without finding it necessary, to give a corresponding lead to the production economy.

Muddled Political Inadequacy

The crucial point is that whereas they were a "middle" class in the sense that their control over society was incomplete and their class ambitions unfulfilled, yet there was really no class above them in the structure of Bengali society: in ordinal terms, they were not "middle" at all. The traditional nobility had been demolished by the cumulative effects of British conquest and the new agrarian system imposed under conditions of colonialism. In its place there grew up this "middle" class which did not have to oust anybody in order to become the leading spokesmen on behalf of their countrymen. They became leaders almost by default. As a consequence, quite unlike the political role of the middle class in the growth of the national states in Europe, they could not define an enemy within their society. Everybody from the zamindar down to the office clerk with a petty tenure in the village was soaked into this amorphous gel. The leaders, therefore, necessarily lacked that clear vision of class goals on which basis they could draw up a programme for a national alliance. While the genuineness of their nationalist feelings against their imperial rulers was unquestioned, they could never combine this role as national leaders with a purposeful programme for leadership over the economy and society.

This explains the total atrophy of objectives and hopeless muddle of forms revealed in the *Swadeshi* movement after 1905. Sumit Sarkar has now given us an excellent account of the period,¹⁴ and there is no need to repeat the story. Here again, there is no question that the Bengali bhadralok were sincerely agitated over what they considered to be an arbitrary division of "the Bengali nation". Yet the insensitivity of the leaders, zealously enforcing the boycott of British goods, towards the problem of providing alternative means of livelihood to petty traders or cheap substitutes to consumers, the rather farcical attempts at starting swadeshi industries, their complete failure on the Hindu-Muslim question, the growing trend towards individual terrorism completely divorced from any

programme of mass mobilization or action, all these were indicative of the inadequacies of this class in providing the leadership necessary for creating a genuine national alliance of all classes oppressed by imperialism.

INTO THE 20th CENTURY MASS MOVEMENT

There are thus three distinct political levels which become relevant to a study of Bengal's politics in the twentieth century. One was the village level, where the leading class consisted of the richer sections of the raiyat peasantry whose primary concern was with political power at the local level. The second level was provincial, dominated by a "middle class" nationalism in political sentiments but uninformed by any positive role in the production economy. And finally there was the question of Bengal's participation in the larger Indian national movement, where the early generation of Bengali nationalists had played a major part as representatives of the upper stratum of English-educated professionals. Consequently, a characterization of Indian politics in this period in terms of "locality, province and nation" does encapsulate this differentiated structure of the national movement.¹⁵

With the advent of mass politics in the 1920s, this constellation of class forces occupied the centre of the political stage in Bengal. Mass participation in the national movement, although widespread in several scattered localities all over the province, was particularly intense and sustained in the districts of south-western Bengal. For every major movement, Midnapore in particular was always recognized in official circles as "one of the worst affected districts in India". In the initial phase of mass mobilization and organization for purposes of these movements in rural areas, the lead was generally taken by the more prosperous sections of the peasantry. For them the objective was to establish a position of leadership and social command over the village. They were agitated by the increasing tax burden on villagers. They were also vocal in their grievances against zamindars who would try to enhance rents without performing any of their duties regarding the improvement of the conditions of cultivation or of village life in general. They resented the arrogance of petty government officials visiting the village. When these people took up the task of mobilizing the mass of the villagers in support of the national movement, they were not (and it is important to note this) acting in their individual roles in order to grab their individual shares of the crumbs of patronage distributed by the government in the locality. Wherever these rural movements became intense and sustained, their leaders—the upper and middle peasantry—were acting to realize very clear class demands.

This becomes evident from a study of the Union Board boycott movements carried out in several areas.¹⁶ The decision in 1919 to create Union Boards in the countryside was, in fact, an official recognition of the growing importance of the class of upper peasantry turned non-cultivating landowner-cum-graindealer-cum-usurer. The Union Boards were designed

to serve the double purpose of creating a new reservoir of patronage to be distributed to these people aspiring to political power in the locality, as well as to widen the net of administrative control to interior villages beyond the police station towns. Yet it so happened that in several areas of the province it was precisely the upper peasantry which led the movement to boycott the Union Boards. Their decision to spurn the offer of government patronage, and their success in rallying the lower ranks of the peasantry behind them in their efforts to resist further administrative penetration into the countryside and the accompanying burden of increased taxation, were both results of a clear perception of their class ambitions.

Stir in the Countryside

The Salt Campaign of 1930 and the Civil Disobedience Movement broadened the mass base of the national movement in the countryside. An organized move to stop payment of government taxes was likely to be popular everywhere. Particularly in the coastal areas of Midnapore, the issue of salt manufacture was not merely an act of symbolic defiance of authority but a matter concerning the satisfaction of one's daily consumption needs, affecting the poorest sharecropper or labourer. In the subdivisions of Contai and Tamluk it was the salt movement which drew large sections of the poorest strata of the population into the organized national movement. Besides, the widespread organization of the spinning and weaving industry in cottages created for a large section of the poor people in the villages an economic stake in the movement. In areas within this region of Bengal where the burden of zamindari rent was particularly oppressive, such as in Hooghly or Bankura or parts of Midnapore, a mass no-tax campaign inevitably led to a no-rent movement against the bigger zamindars.

Indeed, a sustained mass movement comprising different strata of the peasantry develops a dynamic logic of its own. Once the political consciousness of the poorer sections of the peasantry is aroused, and they realize the potential strength of organized struggle, tensions within an alliance led by the richer peasantry become inevitable. In Midnapore, this took the form of a sharecroppers' agitation for a more equitable share of the produce, a lower rate of interest on grain loans, and the abolition of all illegal exactions. Some of the landlord elements were soon estranged from the movement; others took the initiative for a compromise solution in the interests of organizational unity. The growing self-confidence of the middle and small peasantry was clearly manifested in 1942 when the vacuum left by the imprisonment of the older leadership was filled in by a younger generation from a distinctly less prosperous background and a far more radical policy.

That these rural mass movements remained confined to their localities and could not be organized and integrated into a larger political challenge even at the provincial level was due fundamentally to the distorted social development we have described above.¹⁷ The peasantry as a

class is never capable of independently leading a national alliance. The underdeveloped state of market relations in the Bengal countryside made it impossible for even the richer peasantry to think independently in terms of provincial interests. The working class was miniscular in size, and in any case, as we have mentioned before, comprising a large section which did not regard Bengal as its home and which was not integrated to its political life. The task of uniting locality and province and drawing it into the mainstream of all-India politics could only have been performed by a "middle class". Yet, the nature of the middle class in Bengal made it hopelessly unsuited for this task.

Problems of Leadership

The immense gulf which separated the provincial leadership in Calcutta from the growing movements in the countryside can be illustrated to no end. I will mention a few of the more telling ones. An attempt in 1925-26 to create an alliance of district leaders involved in mass movements in order to challenge the entrenched Calcutta leadership was defeated. The move, led by Birendranath Sasmal, leader of the Midnapore movement, was ill-organized, hasty and tactless. But the entire Calcutta leadership—J M Sengupta, Subhaschandra Bose, the famous 'Big Five'—and both major terrorist organizations fought against it with all their strength. Sasmal was defeated and withdrew from the Congress. A complete lack of comprehension of the crucial elements in a successful national struggle was again reflected in the stand of the Congress-Swarajya party members during the debates on the Bengal Tenancy Act Amendment Bill in 1928. The divisions on virtually every clause and every amendment produced the curious picture of members of the Swarajya Party, the party of non-cooperation and uncompromising champions of complete independence, siding with the government in favour of the rights of intermediate proprietors and against those of undertenants and sharecroppers. Indeed, so glaring was this anomaly that during the discussion on a government proposal to allow a landlord to eject a raiyat "on the ground that he has used the land comprised in his holding in a manner which renders it unfit for the purposes of tenancy", Sir Abdur Rahim, himself no peasant leader, commented: "The majority of this Council in combination with the Swarajists, the most powerful party in the House, have already finished with the *bar-gadars*, the cultivators of land ... This powerful combination, which it is not possible for those who have taken up the cause of the ryots to resist successfully, have now taken away the rights of the ryots."¹⁸

The most telling summing up of the priorities of provincial leadership is provided by a Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee himself. Writing to the AICC in reply to repeated inquiries regarding the progress of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Bengal, he concluded a rather unconvincing report with the following sentence: "If we can now put a little more vigour into the movement as we hope to do as soon as we are relieved of the burden of the Corporation elections which come off on

the 18th instant, we feel we shall be able ... to stir up the masses all over the province into activity."¹⁹

On the plane of all-India politics, Bengal's position did indeed decline, once the political forms of the early nationalists finally fell through the trap-door of history. After the 1920s, the all-India Congress ceased to be just a gathering of the upper strata of professionals. The growing all-India bourgeoisie, which did have substantial investments in Bengal, however had no Bengali component. Even on this score, therefore, the nationalist leaders of Bengal had no sustaining interests which would lead them to formulate an economic programme.

Congress in Decline

Interestingly, Muslim leaders from the districts of eastern Bengal realized early enough where their constituency lay. We do not as yet have any systematic study of rural movements in East Bengal from the 1920s and the reasons for this difference in the nature of leadership can only be guessed. There was the fact that the Muslim section of the Bengali middle class was a later development; hence their rural roots had probably not been severed so thoroughly. Secondly, even within the world of middle-class ambitions in a colonial set-up, the Muslim intelligentsia carried a distinct perception of uneven development of the two religious groups. In eastern Bengal particularly, the fact of Hindu domination could be clearly identified in their disproportionate ownership of land. It did not, therefore, require a brilliant stroke of imaginative leadership for Muslim leaders of the eastern districts to connect even a slogan for "more education, more jobs" with a defence of the interests of the vast mass of Muslim peasantry. However, this awareness among Bengali Muslim politicians of the crucial importance of the agrarian question was ideologically limited by another distortion: they could only see its importance in relation to the Muslim question, where the principal enemy was Hindu dominance. They failed to link the whole question to the fact of imperialism. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the entire mass following of the Krishak Proja Party being transferred to the command of the Calcutta Muslim League coterie, which was an almost exact replica of the Bengal provincial Congress leadership.

It would be labouring the obvious to add after this that the national question was not solved in 1947. Perhaps there were differences in the extent to which the potentials for the productive regeneration of a national economy and polity were mobilized within the different nationalities of India: we know that the case of Gujarat was different from that of Bengal. In the absence of adequate knowledge of grassroots nationalism in other parts of India, it is difficult to answer this question satisfactorily. It is probably true that the depth and intensity of colonial exploitation made the distortions in Bengal's social development the most glaring, both in its economy and in ideology. However, we know that the fundamental questions relating to the agrarian economy have not been solved anywhere

in India today. We also know that the only genuinely all-India bourgeoisie has developed a monopoly character almost from its birth, and has numerous ties of dependence with world capitalism. Finally, there is ample evidence of the continuous growth since 1947 of the unproductive sector of the economy, and the mutually sustaining relations between this phenomenon and the populist stance adopted by the ruling classes.²⁰ It is not difficult to understand, then, that failing a major restructuring of the economy, based on a solution of the agrarian question, the enduring effects of an unsolved national question will remain with us. Indeed, an attempt at a more efficient and disciplined capitalism, under state bureaucratic protection, can only aggravate the fundamental problem, not solve it.

A modern historian of Bengal, commenting upon the decline of the Bengal Congress in Indian politics in the 1930s, has said, "The province which had inspired Indian nationalism was sacrificed for its sake. Imperialism devours its own children. Nationalism destroys its own parents."²¹ Had this really been true, India would have been a different country today!

[The author is grateful to Dipesh Chakraborty, S K Chaube Barun, De, Asok Sen and Hitesranjan Sanyal for their suggestions and comments.]

¹ I have discussed the theoretical issues at length in a forthcoming article, "Analyzing Nationalism: Some Concepts and a Framework".

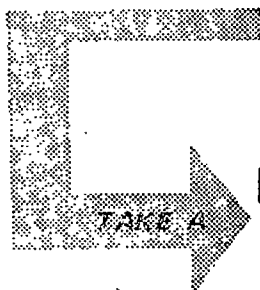
² On this point, see Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" in Lloyd D Easton and Kurt H Guddat (Eds.) *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, Doubleday, Garden City, N Y 1967, pp 216-48.

³ The existence from precapitalist times of this cultural community of nationality, as distinct from the bourgeois concept of "nation" was explicitly recognized by Engels in his three articles on Poland in the *Commonwealth* (March-May 1866): See Marx-Engels, *Werke*, Vol 16, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1973, pp 153-63. Engels maintains this distinction implicitly in *The Peasant War in Germany*, where he talks of "the entire German people" while noting at the same time that "the low level of industry, commerce and agriculture ruled out any centralization of Germans into a nation". The distinction is quite explicit in his manuscript on the "Decay of Feudalism and Rise of National States", appended to *The Peasant War in Germany*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974, pp 178-88. See also, Roman Rosdolsky, "Worker and Fatherland: A Note on a Passage in the *Communist Manifesto*", *Science and Society* 29, 1965 pp 330-7. The distinction has also been made in connection with Chinese discussions on the national question in that country. See Chang Chih-i, "A Discussion of the National Question in the Chinese Revolution and of Actual Nationalities Policy" in George Moseley (Ed.) *The Party and the National Question in China*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1966, pp 29-159. Stalin unfortunately attributes to the "nation" all these characteristics which should properly apply only to the "nationality". This lands him in all sorts of conceptual difficulties when discussing the national question in eastern Europe: J V Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question", *Works*, Vol 2, Gana-Sahitya Prakash, Calcutta 1974, pp 194-215.

⁴ This, I believe, is the central point of the distinction between the "two ways of nationalism" made by Barun De in "Two Ways of Nationalism: Observations on the Relationship between Nationalism, Capitalism and Imperialism", *Essays in Honour of Niharranjan Ray* (forthcoming).

- ⁵ Niharranjan Ray, "The 'Medieval' Factor in Indian History", General Presidential Address, Patiala, 1967, pp 24-29; Ray, *Nationalism in India*, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 1973, pp 28-33.
- ⁶ Ray, *Nationalism in India*, p 32.
- ⁷ Niharranjan Ray, *Bangalir Itihas, Adiparba* (in Bengali), abridged edition, Lekhak Samabay Samity, Calcutta 1967, p 173. My translation.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p 97.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 173-4.
- ¹⁰ B H Baden-Powell, cited in the "Memorandum by the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha," *Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal*, Vol 6, Bengal Government Press, Alipore 1941, p 24.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 28.
- ¹² See in this connection the discussion on the Indian Association's memoranda on the Bengal Tenancy Bill of 1885 in Asok Sen, *Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones*, Chapter on "The Economic Problem", CSSSC, Calcutta 1975 (forthcoming).
- ¹³ For an occupational break-up of early Congressmen, see Bimanbehari Majumdar and Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar, *Congress and Congressmen in the Pre-Gandhian Era, 1885-1917*, Firma K L Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta 1967, pp 18-19.
- ¹⁴ Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi 1973.
- ¹⁵ John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal, *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870-1940*, Cambridge University Press, 1973; particularly Seal, "Imperialism and Nationalism in India", pp 1-27.
- ¹⁶ The following observations on the national movement in Bengal are based on research currently being undertaken at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.
- ¹⁷ John Gallagher, in an essay concerning this period of Bengal's politics, suggests that it was the gradual democratization of various representative institutions after the First World War which gave "the enemies of privilege" the opportunity to wrest the control of local patronage "from the zamindars and their clients". His explication of these rural movements runs on these lines: "When the malcontents of the neighbourhood aligned themselves with the provincial and national campaigns which arose from time to time, they hoped to exploit these issues for their own causes". His zeal to establish this argument leads him to overlook the latent dynamic, and gloss over the more obvious ones, which represented the potential strength of a national alliance based upon a programme for the solution of the agrarian question. The point I have tried to make above is that there exists ample evidence to show that the upper and middle peasantry leading these sustained local movements were conscious of their class ambitions and were led by the logic of united struggle to realize that these class ambitions were inseparably linked with the fate of the entire production economy in rural areas, a solution that was being objectively thwarted by the presence of imperialism. But then, there is probably little use making this point with these new interpreters of Indian history, since "ideology", they believe, "provides a good tool for fine carving, but it does not make big buildings". See Gallagher, "Congress in Decline: Bengal 1930 to 1939", in Gallagher, Johnson and Seal, *op.cit.*, pp 269-325; also Seal's essay cited above.
- ¹⁸ *The Statesman*, 16 August 1928.
- ¹⁹ Letter from Harikumar Chakrabarty, Secretary BPCC, to Jawaharlal Nehru, President AICC, dated 15 March 1930, AICC Papers, File G-120/1930, Part II, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
- ²⁰ Arup Mallik and Partha Chatterjee, "Bharatiya Ganatantra o Bourgeois Pratikria" (in Bengali), *Anyar Artha*, No 8 (May 1975), pp 6-25.
- ²¹ Gallagher, *op.cit.*

WANT QUICKER DELIVERY OF YOUR MAIL?



**POST BOX
POST BAG**

**AT YOUR
POST OFFICE**

**IDEAL FOR
OFFICES
FIRMS
INDIVIDUALS**

It's so useful

Enables you to
collect your mail
earlier and
at your convenience

Ensures greater security
of articles

Saves you considerable
labour and time in
writing the address —
just a number
would do

**RENTAL Rs. 30/-
PER ANNUM**

**APPLY ON
PRESCRIBED FORMS
AVAILABLE AT
ALL POST OFFICES**

**PIN CODE
FOR
FAST MAIL**

**HELP US
SERVE YOU
BETTER**

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

(dvp 76/70)

THE KERALA STATE CASHEW DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED QUILON

Grams : "KASUVANDI"
Telex : 088/204

Phone : 3771, 3772, 3773
and 4102.

We serve the country :

- by being the largest exporter of cashews
- by being the biggest employer in Kerala
- by earning more than Rs 25 crores in foreign exchange
- by being a model employer
- by being a profitable public sector undertaking

All these are possible since about 34,000 people give their sincere service to us.

Our expansion envisages profitable employment to many thousands more.

ANNOUNCING THE FORTHCOMING SPECIAL NUMBER of the **Social Scientist**

In November we are planning to bring out a number which will be centred on the topic of WOMEN.

Advertisers, newsagents who require additional copies and readers whose subscriptions expire earlier than November 1975 are urged to get in touch with the Manager.

MOON STAR GARMENTS

CANNANORE-I

KERALA

(SOUTH INDIA)

**MANUFACTURERS OF HANDLOOM
READY-MADE GARMENTS**

SOCIAL COMPASS

Edited by
F Houtart

Published by
the University of
Louvain, Belgium

A bilingual (English and French) quarterly journal which contains articles on theory, methods and research on the sociology of religion and gives information on national and international conferences.

Each issue is centred on a particular topic, with articles of more general interest appearing in addition to it. Each year one issue is devoted to a country or region.

Since its appearance in 1953, SOCIAL COMPASS has dealt with many different subjects and countries. Among these are: Psychology of Religion (1972); Religion and Secularization (1973); Sociology of Religion in India (1971); Sociology and Anthropology in Sri Lanka (1973)

Subscription: 650 Belgian Francs (roughly Rs 97.50) for a complete volume of four numbers. Concession rates for students on presentation of proof of status.

SOCIAL COMPASS, Vlamingenstraat, 116, B-3000 Louvain, Belgium.



VAIDYARATNAM P.S. VARIER'S
ARYA VAIDYA SALA

Pioneers in Ayurveda
KOTTAKKAL
(Kerala State) Estd. 1902

Phones: Head Office 31, Nursing Home 44, Chief Physician 25, Managing. Trustee 61 (Office) 27 (Residence)

Branches at :

Madras (Phone: 666226), Kozhikode (72155), Palghat (3104), Erode (3172), Tirur (231), Ernakulam (33026), Alwaye (549) and Trivandrum (62349) and over 150 authorized agencies and depots.

Genuine standard Ayurvedic medicines and expert medical advice are available at the Head Office at Kottakkal and all branches, depots and agencies. Medical advice through correspondence is given by the Chief Physician at Kottakkal.

Special treatments like Pizhichil, Navarakkizhi etc., are conducted under the supervision of the Chief Physician at the Golden Jubilee Nursing Home, Kottakkal. Please reserve your rooms in advance and come only after getting confirmation.

Persons desiring to consult the Chief Physician are requested to come only after fixing an appointment in advance.

MANAGING TRUSTEE

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6/7 JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 1975. Current crisis, planning and growth : *Ashok
Mitra*; Current inflation in India : *Prabhat Patnaik*; Fiscal
policies and inflation : *M J K Thavaraj*; Distributional effects
of inflation : *R Radhakrishna* and *Atul Sarma*; State interven-
tion and foodgrain prices : *N Krishnaji*; A world without infla-
tion : *E M S Namboodiripad*; Notes on : Development studies
in Sri Lanka; Parliamentary process.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 8 MARCH 1975
Sociology and sociological radicalism : *S C Varma*; Colonializa-
tion of the Indian economy, 1757-1900 : *Irfan Habib*; Class
character of the Indian Constitution : *Hari Chand*; Theories
of state, Aristotle to Marx : *Arvind N Das*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 9 APRIL 1975
Samuelson's Marx-kritik: *J E King*; Problems of Indian his-
tory: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Origin and development of Islam:
Asghar Ali Engineer; Student leadership in Lucknow: *Rashid
Ali Syed*; Notes on: Mathematical methods in international
relations analysis; Property rights under the Constitution.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10 MAY 1975
Politics of psychoanalysis: *S C Varma*; Political economy of
food, Part I: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Herostone worship in an-
cient south India: *N Vanamamalai*; Student movement at JNU:
Prakash Karat; Note on transnational monopolies.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 11 JUNE 1975
Studies in the development of Indian capitalism: *N Ram*;
Political economy of food, Part II: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Jaya
Prakash Narayan's politics: *S C Varma*; Notes on: Marxism
and Indian sociology; The national sector and commanding
heights; Communication on Marxism and quantum mechanics.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 12 JULY 1975
China and the undivided Communist Party of India: *Georges
Kristoffel Lieten*; Sociology of conflict theory: *Manorama Savur*;
Revolutionary violence in a people's war: *Malcolm Caldwell*;
Note on foreign monopolies and the Indian drug industry;
Communication on Marx, Samuelson and King.

Social Scientist

SEPTEMBER

1975

38

South-East Asia—Thirty Years On □ A. J. A. S.
Language Question in Retrospect □ Some
Problem in Nineteenth-century Bengal □ C.
tians for Socialism □ Desabhimani Study Cl.
Movement in Kerala □ The Past and Project

Social Scientist

Editor
Jacob Eapen

Associate Editor
Mohan Thampi

Editorial & Circulation
SOCIAL SCIENTIST
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US Dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11
Air Mail : Annual \$ 20 (USA & Canada)
\$ 17 (Other countries)

(In Pounds Sterling)

£ 4.50
£ 6.00

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 4 SEPTEMBER
NUMBER 2 1975

CONTENTS

Malcolm Caldwell 3 South-East Asia—Thirty Years
On

M Kar 21 Assam's Language Question in
Retrospect

Archana Mandal 36 The Sonthal Problem in Nine-
teenth-century Bengal

REPORT

48 Christians for Socialism

NOTES

P Govinda Pillai 56 Desabhimani Study Circles:
Literary Movement in Kerala

N I Joseph 61 Medical Representatives on the
March

BOOK REVIEWS

E M S Namboodiripad 65 The Past and Prejudice

Georges Kristoffel Lieten 70 Agrarian Conditions in Northern
India: The United Provinces
under the British Rule, 1860-
1900

Articles, report, notes and book reviews express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

CONTRIBUTORS

MALCOLM GALDWELL who teaches history at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, is editor of the JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ASIA.

N I JOSEPH is general secretary of the Kerala Medical and Sales Representatives' Association.

M KAR is in the department of history, St Edmund's College, Shillong.

GEORGES KRISTOFFEL LIETEN is research scholar at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

ARCHANA MANDAL is in the department of history, Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD is member of the Polit Bureau, Communist Party of India (Marxist).

P GOVINDA PILLAI is chief editor, DESABHIMANI, Cochin and Calicut.

MALCOLM CALDWELL

South-East Asia—Thirty Years On

over American power and American influence locally and globally. I hope to show that what we have witnessed in Indochina is no isolated, inexplicable, random episode in the history of South-East Asia but the working-out of the consequences of those imperatives which shaped the agenda for postwar capitalism and of the conscious choices made by the men responsible for implementing the actions accordingly indicated.

It will be necessary to go back for a moment to the situation as it developed in the inter-war period. For the sake of brevity I shall reduce what is a complex play of forces to two basic elements: first, the consequences of the great inter-war economic depression and the conclusions which the managers of capitalism drew from it; and, second, the configuration of economic and political rivalries which emerged from the crisis specifically in South-East Asia.

Crisis and Contradictions

The crisis of the post-1929 years was of unprecedented severity¹ and compelled all those concerned in decision making, whether in business, politics or (as advisers) academic life, urgently to address themselves to seeking cures for the ills that afflicted capitalism. By and large, they failed to do so until the Second World War created the conditions for rolling up unemployment and for absorbing unused productive capacity. But intimations of the future were not lacking. Outside the western democracies, empirical evidence for what was required was accumulating during the 1830s in the comparative success of the fascist countries in achieving upswing through militarization and expansionism. Roosevelt's pump-priming by welfarism and statism, though limited in magnitude, could be—and was—interpreted as a step in the right direction. And a number of economists, notably John Maynard Keynes in England, were striving towards a theory and practice of managed capitalism. On the other side of the coin, the 1920s and 1930s witnessed a vigorous surge of nationalist and social revolutionary activity in South-East Asia—with premonitions of what was to come in the communist uprisings in Indonesia in 1926-27 and in Vietnam in 1930-31 and in the numerous peasant-based anti-western movements such as the Saya San in Burma and the Sakdalistas in the Philippines. For all the forlorn rearguard actions still to come, whatever remained of laissez-faire capitalism, and with it classical colonialism, was as good as dead.

The depression had most serious consequences for South-East Asia. Raw material prices collapsed, and with them the tenuous purchasing power of the local peoples. The old colonial powers—Britain, Holland, and France—reacted by elaborating a number of commodity restriction schemes designed to reduce output and export (and therefore raise the prices) of primary products, and by taking steps to exclude the consumer goods of more efficient and competitive rivals, such as Japan. The first set of actions antagonized the United States which was historically in the process of transformation from having been a net exporter of raw materials

to becoming a heavy net importer: South-East Asia supplied a number of primary products which could hardly be obtained elsewhere, and certainly not in North America, such as rubber and tin. The second set made it vital for Japan to break the stranglehold thus imposed, as the markets of East Asia were essential to the Japanese if they were to earn what they required to buy the raw materials of the region, without which in turn the survival of Japanese capitalism, far less its expansion and development, would be impossible.³

Besides these contradictions, there was another of tremendous moment: that between the United States and Japan. South-East Asia provided raw materials vital to both: rubber, oil, tin and tungsten among them. Immediately prior to the outbreak of the Pacific war important new discoveries of oil potential in the Indonesian archipelago were being registered as a result of massive prospecting and surveying with the American companies Caltex and Stanvac well to the fore.⁴ Between 1924 and 1942 Caltex had spent an estimated 10 million dollars in Sumatra without taking out a drop of oil. Between them the two American companies had sunk 170 million dollars in oil investment there, and had a tantalizingly clear picture of the oil riches to be had for the drilling in central Sumatra but as yet barely touched.⁵ So, despite the fact that US-controlled oil output in Indonesia constituted at that time but an insignificant fraction of global US-controlled output, the future of Indonesian oil was of major interest to the American oil majors. For the time being however America's most pressing concern as far as South as - East Asian raw materials go was for access to the region's rubber and tin. In 1940, Malaya and Indonesia produced 79 per cent of the world's rubber and 65 per cent of the world's tin (of which Canada and the USA took 64 and 82 per cent respectively), while neighbouring Thailand contributed further rubber and tin and French Indochina further rubber.

Neocolonialism, US Hegemony

For Japan, South-East Asia represented a vital storehouse of raw materials but one of them predominated in their thinking as the Pacific war loomed: oil. Without it, their industry would falter but more significantly, their war machine would seize up completely. There is no doubt that it was the American interdiction of oil to Japan on and from 26 July 1941 that formed the immediate goad to war. Japan's stocks could only last at most for two years; less in a war situation. Emperor Hirohito and his military advisers had little option but to take the desperate gamble of war, hoping for quick decisive victories.⁶ Already, in the second half of 1940, Japan had signalled her intentions by concluding agreements with Thailand and the Vichy French regime in Indochina which gave her forces facilities and access. These moves, in the words of an American business journal, "thrust a dagger into the Allied stronghold of South-East Asia", and the American business community as a whole began to rally accordingly to support for confrontation with Japan, including military

confrontation if necessary.⁷

All these considerations entered into the momentous debates which occupied those concerned with the definition of postwar American foreign economic policy during the Second World War. As radical historians such as Gabriel Kolko⁸ have pointed out, no item ranked so high in the pre-occupations of US policymakers, apart from those flowing from day-to-day fluctuations in the course of the war itself, as the establishment of a postwar global capitalist economy which would resolve the contradictions which had so rudely buffeted and beset capitalism in the 1930s. For Washington, there were two transcendent imperatives: first, to avoid slipping back into the trough of recession, and second to establish guaranteed access to a steadily expanding flow of industrial raw material inputs in order to fuel the hoped for long secular boom in business activity. The former required that the by now incurably inadequate level of spontaneous outlay in the private sector be supplemented by massive state intervention while the latter pointed to the establishment of "equal access", in other words an end to the traditional colonial privileges formerly enjoyed by the western European powers. Both were to have major repercussions for South-East Asia, for while one meant greatly increased US foreign investment eased by government "aid" programmes and—parallel with this—postwar remilitarization, the other pointed to the supersession of colonialism—not by true independence—but by a new form of economic domination (neo-colonialism) under American hegemony.

Global Plan

It is as well at this point in the argument to establish that, while South-East Asia had great intrinsic importance for Washington (as the prolific official memoranda of Stanley K Hornbeck, the State Department's influential Political Adviser for Far Eastern Affairs in the crucial years of decision just before and during the Second World War and formerly the Head of the Far East Division, make clear⁹), it originally featured more in a support role than in the lead to which subsequently it was promoted to play in the Asian arena. It was a key element in the resuscitation of Japanese capitalism (now transformed by a bourgeois revolution pushed through from above and assimilated more or less to a more agreeable pattern of capitalism, from the US point of view¹⁰) to have access to South-East Asia as a source of raw materials, as a market, and as an outlet for investment. Its raw materials were also attractive to American business, and vital to British recovery. It was, nevertheless, at the time but a piece and a relatively small one at that, in a much wider jigsaw whose rims encompassed the entire "free" world, and might yet be made co-terminous with the world economy in toto (for, on the one hand, the "roll-back" of communism had not yet been abandoned as a US policy objective, and on the other there were, in the closing years of the war and in the immediate postwar period, hopes that the Soviet Union and its bloc might be prepared to collaborate economically).

that private NEW YORK-based organization known as the Council on Foreign Relations brought together a group of elite business, academics, lawyers, journalists and government officials to do war planning. These men, in collaboration with the government, worked out an expansionistic conception of the national interest and war aims of the United States. This involved, first of all, a definition of the minimum territorial living space necessary for the continued American economy and society, called the 'Grand Area.' Secondly, it required the delineation of the twin threats to this 'Grand Area'—the ambitions of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. Finally, during the mid-1941 to mid-1944 period, the Council and government expanded the 'Grand Area' to include the entire world and developed international institutions—International Monetary Fund, World Bank and United Nations—needed to integrate the planet under American domination.

Reinstalling Socialism in USA

The scheme was a frankly, even explicitly, imperialist one; without defending freedom and democracy was contemptuously reserved. Public utterances such as the anodyne Atlantic Charter. One assumption upon which planning was based was that, in the words of the influential memorandum quoted by Shoup, of "a world in which (the United States) is to hold unquestioned power."¹² Among themselves, mem-

the ultimate intention was to integrate the entire world economically.

It was recognized that, to achieve this, it would be necessary to have international financial institutions to provide the essential liquidity, to stabilize currencies, and to generate capital for infrastructure investment. If the giant productive capacity of the United States, making huge strides during the war years boosted by military demands around the world, were to be kept at full working in the postwar world it could only be by generating purchasing power worldwide and absorbing it by the sale of American products. Experts moved quickly to plan the appropriate institutions to achieve these ends, including the International Monetary Fund¹⁸ and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, but it was of course appreciated that straight American aid of the Marshall Plan type would also have a vital part to play.

Other specialist groups gave their attention, on behalf of the CFR (and of the special Department of State "Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy", which the CFR helped establish and largely manned), to such questions as the troop requirements and number of overseas bases needed if the American empire was to be adequately defended. Shoup demonstrates that the alternative to imperialism—instituting a socialist system in America—was explicitly rejected and excluded from consideration. This was hardly surprising in view of the interests of those involved in orchestrating the planning process—all men of wealth and of substantial business interests, as Shoup is able to show in his tables (Table II, p 40); Morgan and Rockefeller interests were disproportionately represented. Indeed, CFR planners "explicitly recognized that the *reason* for expansion was to prevent change in the existing American economic system... (and) were arguing for more living space to *maintain* the existing system, from which they obtained their power and great privileges, intact without fundamental changes in the direction of socialism and planning."¹⁸ (Emphasis added.)

Frontline Crescent

The task Washington had thus set itself was vast and promethean. From the outset, implementation fell short of aspiration. China, long of such concern to America, could not be prevented from "falling" to the communists, a major blow which transformed the whole necessary pattern and dictated drawing of the frontier of empire along the Pacific rim, through Indochina, Taiwan and the Korean peninsula.¹⁷ Recovery in Japan was slower than bargained for until the Korean war came along (adventitiously?).¹⁸ for hostilities there not only projected the Japanese economy into an ebullient trajectory from which it has only recently been deflected, but also raised the level of economic activity dramatically right through the region.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it should be appreciated that the ultimate stalemate in Korea, despite massive application of US power, afforded an uncannily accurate premonition of the true fragility of the imperial frontier.²⁰

The several countries of South-East Asia presented a patchwork of headaches to American planners in the postwar period, for each had specific peculiarities. Before I deal with Vietnam, I should like to say something about the three countries of the Malay Crescent—Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines—for each has something of interest and relevance to contribute to the development of the thesis of this article. Besides, in the post-Indochina period, and with a Thailand paralyzed by agony over its dilemma, these three countries are, in effect, the new front line between imperialism and social revolution in the region.

Malaya is of interest on at least two counts: first, we can see the complex working-out of basic changes in the nature of the economy and the appropriate political configuration under the stress of post-1929 sea-changes in the needs and nature of world capitalism; and, second, we have a full-blown example of how counter-insurgency has to be called in as mid-wife at the birth of the neo-colonial state. Even in the thirties the contradictions between the old planter interests, allied with Malay feudalists, and the requirements of both British industry and of the further evolution of capitalism in the peninsula itself had become apparent. These contradictions were to come to a head and erupt with the war, and postwar British government attempts to further “modernization” by constitutional reform and accelerated economic “development”. Evidence of this is to be detected in the controversies over the Malayan Union and the Federation of Malaya alternative,²¹ in the Bauer report on the rubber industry,²² and in concern for the creation of “moderate” trade unions (though in point of fact this overlaps with and shades into British requirements in the pursuit of counter-insurgency).²³

Malaya, Model Neo-colony

Of the Emergency of 1948-60 much has been written, but little of it of more than chronological or anecdotal relevance.²⁴ Suffice it to say at this point that, despite massive British military intervention, the result was very much touch and go, and, of course, the revolutionary forces were never extinguished, whatever some of the arch-planners on the British side subsequently were to claim in their somewhat unseemly boasting. In any case, the outcome of both politico-economic and military manoeuvrings on the part of the British produced in post-1957 independent Malaya a fully fashioned neo-colony, a model, in fact of its kind. Power securely in the hands of a pliant and reliable elite; extractive industries still largely in the hands of the former colonial power; a burgeoning manufacturing sector with a sizable foreign investment component; monetary reserves banked in the metropolitan power and primarily disposed of in its interest; a counter-insurgency-trained neo-colonial army; and the like: the list is surely by now too familiar to require further elaboration on this occasion.²⁵

The Indonesian nationalist movement was, in many respects, much more developed than that of Malaya, and, in consequence, the old

colonial power was quite unequal to the task of re-occupation and re-subjugation. The problem posed by this impotence of the Dutch for the United States was a grave one, for Indonesia was at the heart and core of American concerns for and interests in the South-East Asian region. The Vietnam war was frequently "justified" by American spokesmen by reference to Indonesia, and the following are but two typical quotes in this respect: "Why is the United States spending hundreds of millions of dollars supporting the forces of the French Union in the fight against communism?" asked then vice-president Nixon in 1953. "If Indochina falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaya with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia."²⁶ On another occasion, Nixon spoke of Indonesia in the following fashion "With its 100 million people and its 3000-mile arc of islands containing the region's richest hoard of natural resources, Indonesia constitutes the greatest prize in the South-East Asian area."²⁷ "The loss of all Vietnam", according to Eisenhower, "together with Laos on the west and Cambodia on the south-west, would have... spelled the loss of valuable deposits of tin and prodigious supplies of rubber and rice... And if Indochina fell, not only Thailand but Burma and Malaya would be threatened... as well as... Indonesia." When he was president, Eisenhower had justified US aid to France in the Indochina war by asking how, if Indochina fell, the "free world" could "hold the rich empire of Indonesia?"; he claimed that financial aid to France was "the cheapest way... to get certain things we need from the riches of the Indonesia territory."²⁸

Indonesian Nationalism

All the same, America was not in those years, 1945-49, when the Dutch were palpably losing their grip on their former colonial prize, in any position to take on a colonial war of the magnitude and precariousness suggested by the Indonesian situation. The trick, therefore, was to seek out and to work with "reliable" sections of the elite who headed up what was a vast popular nationalist and anti-imperialist movement with a strong revolutionary component. Behind their often vigorous rhetoric, the leaders of Indonesian nationalism were, in fact, basically conservative, at best populist. Their savage suppression of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1948 gave the US the clue: the Dutch were in effect forced out by American pressure, and the way was open to steadily increasing US dominance of the Indonesian economy in collaboration with elites whose class needs were fulfilled by such cooperation in the context of independence, for when the Dutch left, the top positions in society were open to them. However, as the years 1957 to 1965 were to testify, powerful currents of genuine nationalism, anti-imperialism and social revolution remained pulsing and surging under the surface; it took the "drainage", the blood-letting, of 1965-66 to still them, for the time being.

The cornucopia opened to American, Japanese and other capitalist investors by the Suharto seizure of power affords an important clue

colonial power was quite unequal to the task of re-occupation and re-subjugation. The problem posed by this impotence of the Dutch for the United States was a grave one, for Indonesia was at the heart and core of American concerns for and interests in the South-East Asian region. The Vietnam war was frequently "justified" by American spokesmen by reference to Indonesia, and the following are but two typical quotes in this respect: "Why is the United States spending hundreds of millions of dollars supporting the forces of the French Union in the fight against communism?" asked then vice-president Nixon in 1953. "If Indochina falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaya with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia."²⁶ On another occasion, Nixon spoke of Indonesia in the following fashion "With its 100 million people and its 3000-mile arc of islands containing the region's richest hoard of natural resources, Indonesia constitutes the greatest prize in the South-East Asian area."²⁷ "The loss of all Vietnam", according to Eisenhower, "together with Laos on the west and Cambodia on the south-west, would have... spelled the loss of valuable deposits of tin and prodigious supplies of rubber and rice... And if Indochina fell, not only Thailand but Burma and Malaya would be threatened... as well as... Indonesia." When he was president, Eisenhower had justified US aid to France in the Indochina war by asking how, if Indochina fell, the "free world" could "hold the rich empire of Indonesia?"; he claimed that financial aid to France was "the cheapest way... to get certain things we need from the riches of the Indonesia territory."²⁸

Indonesian Nationalism

All the same, America was not in those years, 1945-49, when the Dutch were palpably losing their grip on their former colonial prize, in any position to take on a colonial war of the magnitude and precariousness suggested by the Indonesian situation. The trick, therefore, was to seek out and to work with "reliable" sections of the elite who headed up what was a vast popular nationalist and anti-imperialist movement with a strong revolutionary component. Behind their often vigorous rhetoric, the leaders of Indonesian nationalism were, in fact, basically conservative, at best populist. Their savage suppression of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1948 gave the US the clue: the Dutch were in effect forced out by American pressure, and the way was open to steadily increasing US dominance of the Indonesian economy in collaboration with elites whose class needs were fulfilled by such cooperation in the context of independence, for when the Dutch left, the top positions in society were open to them. However, as the years 1957 to 1965 were to testify, powerful currents of genuine nationalism, anti-imperialism and social revolution remained pulsing and surging under the surface; it took the "drainage", the blood-letting, of 1965-66 to still them, for the time being.

The cornucopia opened to American, Japanese and other capitalist investors by the Suharto seizure of power affords an important clue

to its ultimate origins. This is not the place to develop the analysis of this aspect of recent Indonesian history, but obviously the fate of Indonesia is of great relevance, and the struggle of the Indonesian peoples to free themselves from neo-colonial enslavement will certainly feature prominently on the stage of history in the next quarter of a century.²⁹

Philippines and Indochina

The Philippine islands fell under American colonial authority at the end of the nineteenth century, and economic motives for the occupation were uppermost.³⁰ In the course of securing their occupancy, the Americans blazed the trail of neo-colonialism by skilfully—and consciously—detaching segments of the Filipino elite to serve their own ends and to divide the strong nationalist movement which had developed towards the end of Spanish rule.³¹ After the Second World War, American planners had to scotch popular resistance to their re-occupation, a resistance which threatened fatally to hamper re-creation of the well-trying cooperation of local elites with American imperialism. The strategy had a number of strands: ferocious suppression of the Huk rebellion; a limited degree of land reform; temporary encouragement to the national bourgeoisie by making some indigenous industrial development possible; and implementation of “independence” with continuing export concessions in the American home market for the politically important local plantation elite.³² If all this spelt, in the end, “success” it nowhere touched the requirements of the poor rural and urban masses, nor was it in the long run wholly acceptable to powerful interests in American capitalism. Therefore, when the time was thought ripe, the IMF crudely stripped the Philippines of its fiscal powers to shield domestic industry, and the economy reverted to a much more typically neo-colonial pattern of extraction on the one hand and of foreign investment in the manufacturing sector (and foreign control of imports for consumption) on the other. Yet this merely added to nationalist grievances and to a widening of their class base, while doing nothing to alleviate poverty and inequality in Filipino society. Growing evidence of a congealing of classes against such neo-colonialism forced the United States to give the green light to Marcos’s seizure of power in 1972.³³

The point to note about all these examples, for all their divergencies, is that “solutions” adopted by the imperialist powers to resolve one set of contradictions merely trigger off others, and increasingly more intransigent and obstinate ones. In no case is this clearer, of course, than in that of Vietnam and its neighbours Laos and Cambodia.

Volumes without number have now been devoted to unravelling the origins of the Vietnam war.³⁴ Without embarking upon tedious exegesis on this abundant material, I would suggest that one point surely is now firmly established: namely that US involvement was no “accident”, no “aberration”, no random and inexplicable vagary of a capricious history. On the contrary, from Roosevelt’s “mandate” proposal, to the

use of US transport ships to convey French soldiers to Indochina at the end of the war, through provision of massive aid to French colonialism to enable it re-establish imperialist control by military means, on to Civil Air Transport (now Air America) logistic support for the French at Dien Bien Phu³⁵ and beyond, successive American administrations devoted themselves to securing the Asian frontier of empire in Indochina, as—at the other extremity—in Korea. Our answer to the question “why?” takes us to the root of the explanation of overall US economic and foreign policies in South East Asia. I shall not attempt anything more ambitious here than highlighting what I consider to be the most significant elements for our present purposes.

No one has ever seriously suggested that Vietnam *per se* held out economic attractions sufficiently alluring to account for the overwhelming American commitment, which lasted until what is still (in 1975) just the other day. It is important, however, to grasp the following components of a realistic interpretation and explanation: one, the geographic-strategic significance of Indochina for the defence of the rest of South and South-East Asia, particularly given the “fall” of China; two, the undoubted proven and potential economic attractions of the immediate protected area; three, the existence from the beginning of particular interests, with powerful leverage in Washington decision-making, that certainly had good reason to urge and struggle for the “saving” of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; and, four, the development of much wider economic interests in the region precisely as a result of US commitment and involvement. Oil, it may be said, comes into categories two, three and four.

Puppets on a String

Our interest for the time being is not really to catalogue and document such aspects but to bring out the relevance of the Vietnam case as a paradigm; honest investigation of what was there attempted, and why and how the attempt failed, reveals more sharply than anything else could the Canute-like futility of trying to impose neo-colonialism in the hope and expectation of perpetuating western economic global hegemony and of frustrating the aspirations of the peoples of Asia (and of Africa and Latin America) for command over their own resources and their own destinies.

The Americans whose responsibility it was to foist upon the peoples of Vietnam a government responsive to metropolitan needs and wishes were under no illusions about the awesome magnitude of the task that faced them. A multi-layered approach, of a sophistication far beyond what had been called for and answered in the Philippines or Indonesia (or, on the part of the British, in Malaya), was urgently demanded in a situation where the people overwhelmingly supported Ho Chi Minh and the movement for independence. We are not here directly concerned with the counter-insurgency aspects though it must be stressed that these are integral to the functioning of neo-colonialism, and any discussion of the postwar

evolution of the newer forms of economic domination which does not make mention of this reality is grossly misleading and virtually worthless from the point of view of serious intellectual analysis.⁸⁶ What we have to enquire into are the social, political, and economic dimensions and the ignominious failure of the United States to capitalize upon its opportunity and its economic and military might.

It is axiomatic that effective neo-colonialism hinges upon finding, installing and preserving in power local leaders amenable to metropolitan pressures and with an at least adequate indigenous social base. The American record in Vietnam (and in Laos and Cambodia) in this respect is too well known to require elaboration, but it should be pointed out that there are two immediately obvious difficulties with selecting and appointing a puppet president or whatever. The first is that anyone so prepared to serve in that capacity will sooner or later, as the domestic anti-imperialist struggle develops, of necessity have to face the charge of quisling, a prospect which automatically limits the field to those who can accept it with cynical equanimity. The fabulous fortunes built up by such as Thieu, Lon Nol, Sarit and Marcos accurately registers the motives of such puppets, who can afford to be contemptuous of such considerations as patriotism and the welfare of the people. The second difficulty is that a social base has to be constructed out of elements whose motives are such that their commitment under pressure is not only suspect but frankly unlikely. Compradores beholden to western interests; bureaucratic and political "dollar addicts", the western-trained, armed and financed military officer class; by and large, members of those and other neo-colonial groups have interests and horizons which not only are not the same as, but are in fact antithetical to, those of the broad masses of the urban and rural poor and lower middle classes of their own countries. When local insurgency reaches crisis point, it is haven in the West and the Swiss bank account which are the focal points of concern rather than staying on to sacrifice comfort and perhaps life to "defend freedom and democracy" (the economic interests of the imperialist powers) as the original bargain stipulated, if not overtly at least tacitly.

Development Fascism

This is an insuperable intrinsic political weakness of neo-colonialism. It ought also to be noted that fear of insurgency is bound to —and does— lead to progressively rigorous suppression of political freedoms and of effective political opposition.⁸⁷ Ultimately, this tightening of the screw becomes quite self-defeating as formerly neutral elements in society become convinced that the first step in a direction recognizably forward demands as its first condition the dismantling of neo-colonial dictatorship and domination.

The economic aspects interact with, and serve to exacerbate, these socio-political realities. We are discussing the expansion of capitalism in Third World countries, and in the case study of Vietnam we may observe the working-out of the logical ultimate consequences. Let us here match

Vietnam with other South-East Asian countries on several counts to detect some of the inevitable contradictions. For instance, the ideal aim, given "stability" (absence of an active national liberation struggle or a "controlled"—contained—one), is to extend capitalism in the countryside by promoting "efficiency" via market forces, allowing, in other words, the development of big landholdings, and freeing the dispossessed peasantry for wage employment in the non-rural sector; in the "free" world, the Green Revolution has an important role to play in this context.³⁸ In the Vietnam situation, the exigencies of counter-insurgency demanded something quite different: land "reform" to placate the peasantry (potential recruits to the revolutionary army).³⁹ Now, if land reform is effective, it must necessarily damage the interests of the landlord class, to whom the imperialist powers have to look for support; an ineffective land reform, half-hearted and baulked by landlord interests, can only (as in Vietnam) hasten the disillusionment and alienation of the peasantry.

As far as the development of industry and the tertiary sector is concerned, other built-in contradictions are evident. Ideally, in under-developed countries, industry should service the poor peasant, in the first place, and absorb the unemployed and underemployed, in the second (as in China).⁴⁰ Neo-colonial industrial development meets neither of these criteria; the private investor, whether local or foreign, seeks markets, that is, buyers with purchasing power; the kind of investment undertaken with this in mind is for the most part capital-intensive and productive of consumer goods with sales appeal only to the minority social elite (and furthermore stimulating ultimately unfulfillable urges for emulation in sections of the rest of local society, thus distorting further demand pressures on the economy). One can see the consequences of such "development" in several South-East Asian countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Lessons of Vietnam

In Vietnam, deterioration in the insurgency situation finally eroded to the point of extinction what had been so precariously attained along even these lines in the late fifties and early sixties. This was a natural result of the inexorable militarization of almost the entire economy. In the "free world" portion of the country virtually the entire population eventually became dependent, one way or another, upon the bloated and, be it said, reluctant mercenary armed forces of the Thieu speculators and their American masters. The costs of these unmotivated armed forces derived, in turn, not from domestic taxes (voluntarily and patriotically given, as would have been the case had the Thieu regime had any claim to even a modicum of domestic support) but from funds dispensed by the United States of America. In South Vietnam in the first half of the 1970s, we saw with stark and unmistakable clarity the *reductio ad absurdum* of frontier neo-colonialism.⁴¹

If militarization (as opposed, that is, to full mobilization of a

people through people's war) is an economic termite in the long run to poor societies,⁴² it also fatally undermines the society in other ways, for its logic points, as the crisis deepens, to pressing young children, old men, and reluctant conscripts of all sorts and conditions into active service. The resultant armies, as well as being professionally inefficient, are of low morale, the more so since the rich and the sons of the rich can, and invariably do, bribe themselves out of service; pay and supplies are often withheld by corrupt officers; and official provision made for families left at home are seldom or ever adequate. On the other side of the picture, the flabby and self-indulgent professional core of the mercenary neo-colonial armed forces, highly trained or more accurately extensively trained and lavishly supplied and cosseted by the US, come more and more to rely upon massive firepower and technological applications of all kinds, and have less and less stomach for fighting "at six inches" (or indeed at all, if it can be avoided or foisted upon someone else); people's war obviously cannot be defeated by such means.⁴³

It may be argued that all this, while true of Indochina, is of little relevance to neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The first rejoinder to this is that it is, in my view, only a question of degree. The second is that each neo-colony in turn must become the frontier and face the prospect of accelerated "Vietnamization" unless one assumes that the imperatives moulding neo-colonialism are so changing or will so change as to permit some form of peaceful transition to liberation.

Third World Liberation

Consideration of this is crucial to the argument so I shall end on this point. As we saw, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Special Advisory Committee of the Department of State which liaised with it recognized quite explicitly that economic expansionism guarded by far-flung military deployment, that is, imperialism, was essential to the survival of the American social system, a social system which yielded up such signal rewards to the members of these powerful planning bodies and the tiny social class they represented and served. The sole alternative to imperialism, as they freely conceded, was creation of a socialist system in the United States, a prospect that was anathema to them and that they were dedicated to preventing.

Imperialist expansion (and they did not shrink from using the phrase among themselves while eschewing it in public) was necessary to secure essential raw materials on favourable terms, to capture overseas markets, to provide outlets for investment, and in general to keep the immense productive apparatus of the United States fully employed and stretched. Today, with the entire capitalist system lurching into deep recession, with the scramble for markets and raw materials immeasurably heightened and intensified, and with the same class perspective dominant in Washington, the prospect that US leaders will voluntarily relinquish

pursuit of the economic objectives which alone guarantee the survival of the class for whom they speak and act seems to be an impossibly remote one. We may safely assert, therefore, that the contradictions which the Indochina war threw into clear relief, and which are dormant or in various stages of development throughout the neo-colonial "free world" empire, will ultimately be resolved only through the determination of the peoples of these countries one by one to win liberation by armed struggle. That is the pattern of the postwar Third World, a pattern implicit from the outset in the designs so carefully drawn up in Washington and New York, White House and Wall Street, from 1939 to 1944.^{4 5}

¹ A recent account, with a useful bibliography, is C P Kindleberger, *The World in Depression 1929-1939*, Allen Lane, London 1973; it does not, however, deal with the impact of the depression on Asia, an omission unfortunately almost universal in the main economic analyses of the period (a minor exception to this stricture is to be found in the literature concerning the commodity control schemes—see footnote 2 below).

² The following works are useful: J W F Rowe, *Markets and Men*, New York 1936; W L Holland (Ed.), *Commodity Control in the Pacific Area*, London 1935; P L Yates, *Commodity Control*, London 1948; K E Knorr, *Tin under Control*, Stanford 1945; P T Bauer, *The Rubber Industry*, London 1948; and J W F Rowe, *Primary Commodities in International Trade*, Cambridge 1965.†

³ For an excellent recent history of Japan from a Marxist perspective see Jon Halliday, *A Political History of Japanese Capitalism*, Pantheon, New York 1975.

⁴ Stanvac was incorporated in 1933, with equal participation by Socony-Vacuum and Standard Oil of New Jersey; in 1936 Standard Oil of California teamed up with Texaco to operate as Caltex in Indonesia.

⁵ See J W Gould, *Americans in Sumatra*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1961, p 76.

⁶ See J Toland, *The Rising Sun*, Cassell & Co., London 1970, pp 85-86 *et passim*.

⁷ For an invaluable and well-documented treatment of the thesis that it was for control over South-East Asian raw materials that the US and Japan went to war in the Pacific, see J Marshall, "Southeast Asia and US-Japan Relations, 1940-41" *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram*, March-April 1973, Vol IV, No 3.

⁸ See, *inter alia*, G Kolko, *The Politics of War*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1969; G Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy*, Beacon Press, Boston 1969; and D Horowitz (Ed.) *Corporations and the Cold War*, MR Press, New York 1969.

⁹ Two extracts cited in a review article by J Marshall ("Pearl Harbour", *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram*, March-April, 1974, Vol V, No 3) may be taken as typical; The first comes from his "famous and extremely influential" (Marshall's words) memorandum on "The Importance of Singapore to the Defence of the British Isles and the British Empire and to the Interests of the United States" which says: "The importance of Singapore to the immediate defence of the British Isles lies in its command of the means of access to the raw materials and manpower of Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and India. While the British Isles could doubtless do without direct access to these materials and to this manpower, the effect of such a loss upon the economic and financial resources of the British empire—a vital factor in the defence of the British Isles would be considerable. Such a loss by seriously weakening our own economy (rubber, tin, jute, quinine, vegetable oils, tungsten, antimony, mica are among the supplies that might be lost to us) would adversely affect the extent of our economic aid to the British Isles." The other, drafted earlier in the same year (1940) says this: "Only on the lands west of the Pacific, and especially on southeastern Asia is our dependence so vital and so complete that our very existence as a great industrial power, and perhaps even

- as an independent state, is threatened if the sources (of raw materials) should be cut off."
- ¹⁰ See on this G and J Kolko, *The Limits of Power*, Harper & Row, New York 1972; D Horowitz, *Imperialism and Revolution*, Random House, New York 1969; J Halliday, *op. cit.*
 - ¹¹ L H Shoup, "Shaping the Postwar World", *The Insurgent Sociologist*, Easter 1975 special number on "New Directions in Power Structure Research," edited by G W Domhoff.
 - ¹² *Ibid.*, p 16.
 - ¹³ *Ibid.*, p 14.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p 34.
 - ¹⁵ See Cheryl Payer, *The Debt Trap—The IMF and the Third World*, Penguin Books, London 1974.
 - ¹⁶ Shoup, *op. cit.*, p 41.
 - ¹⁷ Retreat to Taiwan was hardly optional in the circumstances, but all kinds of historical, geographical and logistic considerations made the selection of South Korea and South Vietnam as frontier posts of empire understandable from Washington's point of view: as the French Marshal Lyautey, "then a young officer in charge of operations on the northern border of Indochina, observed: 'Tonkin is a doorway; the doorway must be kept bolted.' Japanese strategy during the Second World War showed the soundness of this appreciation and doubtless Dulles's famous dictum about the row of dominoes, following the French collapse in 1954, was inspired by similar considerations." (C A Fisher, *South-East Asia*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964, p 575.)
 - ¹⁸ It is important in this context to examine the case for the economic importance of the Korean War to the recovery of capitalism in G & J Kolko, *The Limits of Power*, Harper & Row, New York 1972; subsequent controversy was conducted, *inter alia*, in *Pacific Historical Review*, November 1973. Fresh evidence on the actual proximate opening of hostilities is to be found in K Gupta, "How did the Korean War Begin?", *China Quarterly* No 52, October-December 1972; and his reply to critics in *China Quarterly* No 54.
 - ¹⁹ Cf. "Since the Korean war began, and the United States, in particular, had begun an enormous expansion of its strategic stockpile, the Malayan economy had been borne up by the boom in tin and rubber prices. In 1950 the price of rubber rose from 1s. 3d. to a peak of 5s. 11d. per pound; and in the case of tin from £578 10s. to £1,300 per ton. This had meant a considerable increase in Malaya's export earnings—it continued to be the principal earner of American dollars for the entire Commonwealth—and in 1950 Malaya had a favourable balance in its overseas trade for the first time since the War." (A Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960*, Muller, London 1975, pp 346-347; ironically, this Korean-war-induced wealth enabled the British to finance their suppression of the Malayan national and social revolution.
 - ²⁰ There has been a marked recrudescence of interest in the Korean war and the Korean revolution in recent years: see the special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* on Korea (Vol V, No 2) published in June 1975, to mark the 25th anniversary of the outbreak of the war for original articles and reappraisals and for bibliographic guidance.
 - ²¹ See J de V Allen, *The Malayan Union*, Yale Southeast Asian Monograph Series No 10 1967; for the background of Malay nationalism see W R Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1967; the clash between old and new capitalist interests in the peninsula is vividly illuminated by the controversies that went on between respective proponents in the columns of the local and British press.
 - ²² See P T Bauer, *The Rubber Industry*, Longmans Green, London, 1948; G Lec, "Commodity Production and Reproduction amongst the Malayan Peasantry", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 3, No 4, 1973.
 - ²³ See M R Stenson, *Industrial Conflict in Malaya*, OUP, London, 1970.
 - ²⁴ For a bibliography see A Short, *op. cit.*, pp 368, 466 and 509 *et seq.*; there is

unfortunately, no good account of the emergency from an analytical and Marxist perspective though it is hoped to start making good this omission in a manuscript currently under preparation with the present writer as editor and tentatively entitled *Malaya, The Making of a Neo-colony*. It is of the utmost significance that during the Vietnam war, several British counter-insurgency "experts" bloodied in Malaya, served in Saigon; at the same time great interest was taken in research "tanks" in the United States in the emergency: see, for example, the Rand Corporation study *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counter-insurgency Effort*, Santa Monica 1972. For a typical offering by a British counter-insurgency expert with experience in Malaya see R Clutterbuck, *Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya 1945-1963*, Faber and Faber, London 1973.

- ²⁵ A recent perceptive study of neo-colonialism which, though it deals specifically with Indonesia, is of relevance is R Mortimer (Ed.), *Showcase State*, Angus and Robertson, Melbourne 1973.
- ²⁶ This and the first of the Eisenhower quotations are from G Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy*, Beacon Press, Boston 1969, pp 98-100.
- ²⁷ See *Foreign Affairs*, October 1967.
- ²⁸ Cited in "Indonesia - The Making of a Neo-colony", *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram*, Vol I, No 1.
- ²⁹ Aside from the volume edited by Rex Mortimer and cited above (footnote 25), the following afford starting points for the development of a radical analysis of the Indonesian situation: British Indonesia Committee, *Repression and Exploitation in Indonesia*, Spokesman Books, Nottingham 1974; E Utrecht, *Indonesie's Nieuwe Orde*, Van Gennep, Amsterdam 1970; Francoise Cayrac-Blanchard, *Le Parti Communiste Indonesien*, Armand Colin, Paris 1973; R Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1974; and numerous articles and documents in the *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, including the seminal "Suharto and the Untung Coup—The Missing Link" (Vol I, No 2, 1970); see also David Ransom's well-known article on the "Berkeley Mafia" as re-published and amended as "Ford Country: Building an Elite for Indonesia", in S Weissman (Ed.), *The Trojan Horse*, Ramparts Press, San Francisco 1974.
- ³⁰ Philippine history is currently being subjected to intensive re-scrutiny, the shallowness of much past writing becoming increasingly obvious. The reader is referred to the following, from a variety of viewpoints: J Fast and Luzviminda Francisco: "Philippine Historiography and the De-mystification of Imperialism", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol IV, No 3, 1974; Amado Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, Pulang Tala Publications, Manila 1971; W J Pomeroy, *American Neo-Colonialism*, International Publishers, New York 1970; and, again, to continuing analyses in the *Journal of Contemporary Asia*.
- ³¹ See, for instance, the recently published five volumes by John R M Taylor, *The Philippine Insurrection against the United States: A Compilation of Documents with Notes and Introduction*, Lopez Foundation, Pasay City 1971, with an introduction by Renato Constantino. Taylor was connected with the collection of intelligence for the US administration in the early years of the occupation. When completed, his work was suppressed by then secretary of state Taft (a former governor-general of the Philippines) as an altogether too shrewd and accurate depiction.
- ³² See, *inter alia*, the following: W J Pomeroy, *Guerrilla and Counter-guerrilla Warfare*, International Publishers, New York 1964; W J Pomeroy, *The Forest*, International Publishers, New York 1963; W J Pomeroy, *An American-made Tragedy*, International Publishers, New York 1974; A H Scaff, *The Philippine Answer to Communism*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1955; F L Starnes, *Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry*; R E Huke, *Shadows on the Land*, Bookmark Inc., Manila 1963; J H Power and G P Sicat, *The Philippines—Industrialization and Trade Policies*, OUP, London 1971; Cheryl Payer, *The Debt Trap*, Penguin, London 1974; F H Golay, *The Philippines—Public Policy and*

National Economic Development, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1961; G Farwell, *Mask of Asia*.

- ³³ See AREAS, *Philippines - End of An Illusion*, London 1973.
- ³⁴ There is an incomplete but useful bibliography in M Leitenberg and R D Burns, *The Vietnam Conflict*, ABC-Clio Inc., Oxford 1973.
- ³⁵ On Air America and its antecedents see P D Scott, *The War Conspiracy*, Bobs-Merrill Co Inc., Minneapolis and New York 1972; this excellent book appears to have suffered suppression—presumably by the CIA?—for its uncomfortable exposures. Scott's work in the field of imperialism's mechanics has been patient, ingenious and invaluable; see for example his "The Vietnam War and the CIA-Financial Establishment" in M Selden (Ed.) *Remaking Asia*, Pantheon Books, New York 1974. Familiarity with the Pentagon Papers, preferably in the annotated five-volume Beacon edition (Boston 1971-72) is obviously essential. See also R Stavins, R J Barnet & M G Raskin, *Washington Plans an Aggressive War*, Davis-Poynter, London 1972. Two books by Vietnamese scholars are indispensable in vividly portraying the deep and tenacious roots of Vietnamese nationalism: Truong Buu Lam, *Patterns of Vietnamese Response to Foreign Intervention 1858-1900*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1967; and Ngo Vinh Long *Before the Revolution*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1973. Also recommended is Helen B Lamb *Vietnam's Will to Live*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1972.
- ³⁶ It is worth recalling that the assumption was prevalent among US policymakers that (so hostile were the peoples of Vietnam to the substitution of US neo-colonialism for French colonialism) it was axiomatic that sheer *suppression* was the first consideration; the Michigan State University Group, which contracted to help enforcement of US control, gave more attention to training police and civil guards and to building prisons and torture chambers than to training teachers and doctors and to building schools and clinics (see J McDermott, *Vietnam Profile*, CND, London 1966).
- ³⁷ Conditions towards the end of the Thieu regime are vividly captured by Benjamin Cherry (a young English writer expelled from South Vietnam, for his honest reporting in 1972) in his article "Eye-witness in South Vietnam", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol 3, No 2, 1973; see also Nguyen Khac Vien "With the Survivors of the Prisons of Saigon" in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol IV, No 1, 1974.
- ³⁸ The "Green Revolution" has—whatever else it has achieved—yielded a huge harvest of comment and commentary; enquirers might care to start with a US government report entitled "The Green Revolution" (Washington, 1970) which runs through most major aspects. A fascinating contrast, specifically related to South-East Asia, may be had by reference to the following two articles: R W Franke, "Miracle Seeds and Shattered Dreams in Java", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol IV, No 3, 1974; and Alec Gordon, "The 'Green Revolution' in North Vietnam" *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol IV, No 1, 1974. See also W F Wertheim, "Betting on the Strong?" in *East-West Parallels*, W Van Hoeve, The Hague 1964.
- ³⁹ An earnest but—properly construed—informative account is: R L Sansom, *The Economics of Insurgency in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1970; the reader is, however, also referred to the more direct and honest appraisals in such sources as *Vietnamese Studies*, Nguyen Khac Vien (Ed.) and other such Vietnamese accounts.
- ⁴⁰ The literature on the Chinese model is now immense, but those delving into the subject seriously for the first time may safely be referred to the following as starting points. M Selden, *The Tenan Way*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1972; J Belden, *China Shakes the World*, MR. Press, New York 1970; W Hinton, *Fanshen*, Penguin Books, London 1966; K Buchanan, *The Transformation of the Chinese Earth*, Bell, London 1970; E L Wheelwright and B McFarlane, *The Chinese Road to Socialism*, Penguin Books, London 1973; J Gray, "Mao Tse-tung's Strategy for the Collectivization of Chinese Agriculture", in E de Kadt and G Williams (Eds.), *Sociology and Development*, Tavistock Publications, London 1974; K W Kapp, *Environmental Policies*

and *Development Planning in China*, Mouton, The Hague and Paris 1974.

- ⁴¹ The sections on pre-liberation South Vietnam in the Asian Development Bank volume *Southeast Asia's Economy in the 1970s*, Longman, London 1971, are not without interest for those able and willing to read between the lines; but see also Cheryl Payer's chapter "Money to Burn: At War in Indochina" in *The Debt Trap*, Penguin Books, London 1974, and G Kolko's "The United States Effort to Mobilize World Bank Aid to Saigon", in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol V, No 1, 1975.
- ⁴² It would be foolhardy to attempt a limited bibliography of even merely the *economic* aspects of militarism, but readers should acquaint themselves with one or two basic texts such as chapter seven of P A Baran and P M Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, MR Press, New York 1966; SIPRI, *The Arms Trade with the Third World*, Humanities Press, New York 1971; F Cook, *The Warfare State*, London 1963; D Horowitz (Ed.) *Corporations and the Cold War*, MR Press, London 1969; M Klare, *War Without End*, Vintage Books, New York 1972; "L C Lewin", *Report from Iron Mountain*, London 1968; Seymour Melman, "The Economic Consequences of Intervention and Disengagement", in E C Ravenal (Ed.): *Peace with China?*, Liveright, New York 1971.
- ⁴³ The frailty and lack of guts of neo-colonial puppet armies are now both legendary and abundantly on record (as most recently made evident in the fold-up of resistance in Cambodia and Vietnam in the early part of 1975 on the part of the mercenaries). It is instructive, however, to look more deeply into the question of morale, and for this purpose the performance of US forces in support of puppet regimes is enlightening: see, for instance, R W Thompson, *Cry Korea*, Panther Books, London, 1956; J Tunstall, *I Fought in Korea*, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1953; R Boyle, *The Flowering Dragon*, Ramparts Press, San Francisco 1972. The attentive reader will, of course, have followed the material on US military disintegration in Vietnam *via* the press and pamphlets and publications of disillusioned veterans. A number, as is now irrefutably documented, actually crossed over and joined the NLF; others became sympathetic in captivity (see G Smith: *POW-Two Years with the Vietcong*, Ramparts Press, San Francisco 1972.)
- ⁴⁴ See Joyce Kolko, *America and the Crisis of World Capitalism*, Beacon Press, Boston 1974.
- ⁴⁵ As far as South-East Asia is concerned, the area fell so obviously in the American sphere of influence at the beginning that the Soviet Union initially paid it little attention: see C B McLane, *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1966.

M KAR

Assam's Language Question in Retrospect

ASSAM'S CONTACTS with Bengal date back to ancient times. The Ahom Kings encouraged people to settle here as artisans, weavers, clerks, scholars and divines. Inflows of people from Bengal continued in driplets over a span of nearly five centuries of attempted Muslim conquest. They settled mostly in the Brahmaputra Valley. Cachar was a Bengali-speaking area long before the decline of the Ahom power. Major portions of Cachar and Sylhet and Goalpara, also Bengali-speaking, came under the provincial administration of Assam in 1874.

Following the treaty of Yandabow, 1826, the East India Company at first tried to establish its hegemony in Assam through a puppet king. That experiment failed and then the Company annexed the territory and placed it under the Bengal administration. The establishment of the Company's authority, consequent necessity of manning the different government departments and the reconstitution of Assam bringing in large Bengali-speaking areas, may be said to have marked the beginning of the language problem. It was then a problem of finding educated persons for an administrative machinery to facilitate expansion of the empire. A comparative study of the extent of education in Bengal and Assam is not warranted here but admittedly a number of Bengalees already conversant in the art of government came to the province on various assignments to

serve the interests of the British administration, replacing the indolent and incapable nobility of the earlier regime.¹

Persian was the court language of the Bengal Presidency of which Assam was now an administrative unit. Few of the new recruits in Assam knew English or Persian. Therefore, "in April 1831, the Government of Bengal made Bengali in place of Persian the court language of Assam on the ground that it was very difficult and too costly to have replacement when a Persian scribe was on leave or left the service".² Bengali was actually introduced in 1837. The services of the Bengalees immediately became indispensable in the Anglo-vernacular and vernacular schools, "since local teachers were not available in adequate numbers, in any case to impart lessons in Bengali which had since become the medium of instruction."³ It may be mentioned here that Act XXIX of 1837 had provided for the use of the vernacular of a district in the court, but the government allowed the replacement of Assamese there also. However, the missionary and indigenous schools continued to teach Assamese. The first Assamese journal *Arunoday* was started by the American Baptist Mission from Sibsagar in 1846.⁴ The general notion engendered later on that the Bengalees were responsible for this change does not bear historical scrutiny. The need of educating the children of the subordinate Bengali officials in their mother-tongue was obvious and they might have demanded education accordingly though there is no evidence of any organized demand. In those days of British imperial expansion, the Bengalees as other Indians had little say in determination of policy beyond petitioning the authorities for any right or facility. All power centres in the administrative machinery were filled by Englishmen. To the Company, territory and good trade, consolidated through an efficient administration, were of the greatest importance.

Language in Court and School

With progress of education following British occupation, the demand for restoration of Assamese as a language of education and courts was natural and was for the first time voiced by Ananda Ram Dhekia Phukan.⁵ A J Moffat Mill, an officer deputed by the Bengal government to report on Assam, also clearly expressed his view in support of the language. Although it was too late to retrace the step, Mill thought that the administration had made a great mistake in directing that all business should be transacted in Bengali which the Assamese had to learn.⁶ The first ever formal recommendation for introduction of Assamese in the courts, made by Colonel Hughton, the commissioner of Assam Valley was rejected by the Bengal government.⁷ In the meanwhile, all Assam civil officers were compelled to pass a test in Assamese (just as Bengal officers had to pass in Bengali) thus recognizing the vernacular status of Assamese: the government, however, showed no inclination to go any further.⁸ By the time the province was reconstituted into a chief commissionership in 1874, memorials from different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley were being presented to the Government of Bengal for introduction of Assamese in the

schools and courts.⁹ Lieutenant-governor Sir George Campbell held that "the vernacular of a people ought not to be elbowed out of a country in favour of another language which happened to be the vernacular of a neighbouring, more numerous and more educated people."¹⁰

He also observed that the tendency of the Government of India and of the legislation of late years was to permit the vernacular of each province to be used in its courts. He called for reports on languages spoken in different districts of Assam and enquired why Bengali should not be replaced by Assamese. A majority of the deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners, except the deputy commissioners of Goalpara, were in favour of Assamese but Colonel Hopkinson, commissioner of Assam Valley districts for 13 years prior to his retirement in 1884, and another very experienced English officer, A E Campbell, were in favour of retention of Bengali.¹¹ Sir George Campbell, asserted that the vernacular of the province was Assamese and in a resolution dated 19 April 1873, he prescribed the use of Assamese in the courts. It was also decided that in all primary schools, Assamese will be taught to the exclusion of Bengali; also in all middle schools and in the lower and middle classes of higher schools. When a class of 12 or more boys wish for it, Bengali may be separately taught to them as a language. In the upper class of higher schools, every subject in which there is an Assamese book is to be taught in Assamese; subjects in which Assamese school-books do not exist can be taught either in Bengali or in English.

Textbook Hurdle

He also admitted that the real difficulty in recognizing Assamese was the paucity of Assamese books.¹² By this order, clearly, Bengali as a medium of instruction in the lower classes of all types of schools was discarded and teaching of Bengali was allowed only as an exception rather than the rule, and in higher classes Bengali could be replaced only if books in Assamese were available.

The absence of Assamese text books, however, presented an insurmountable obstacle to the operation of this order and the next year C A Martin, inspector of schools, lamented: "the Assamese language has no literature of its own deserving the name so that at present the effect of this order is to bring education in the valley districts of the Province more or less to a standstill ... means should be devised to guard against the existing schools falling into a rapid decline."¹³ He also pointed out that boys who went to the high schools had to take Bengali because Sanskrit, the alternative subject, could be taught only to a specific number of students and that number was hardly ever there. As regards Goalpara, he advocated a dichotomy of policy as he asserted that the people had expressed their choice in favour of Bengali. As regards middle schools, higher classes of high schools and normal schools, he suggested the retention of Bengali, "for in these classes the most difficult subjects will be taught and the more difficult the subjects, the more nearly must language

approach to good classical Bengali.”¹⁴ This could not have been palatable to people whose mother-tongue was Assamese.

Luttman Johnson, secretary to the chief commissioner, wrote in reply that the latter adhered to the lieutenant-governor's decision, making it obligatory to teach Assamese as a vernacular and not Bengali. The rigidity was, however, relaxed by allowing the use of the language most easily and best understood by the student and deciding that “if the boys understand Bengali, the chief commissioner has no objection to Bengali books being used. Even when they understand Bengali imperfectly, Bengali books in absense of others may be used.” Another relaxation was made by allowing the teaching of Bengali as a separate language at the discretion of the director of public instruction (DPI). Goalpara was excluded from the operation of this order. The inspector of schools was also permitted to introduce into the primary schools a set of primers according to his preference. In the higher classes of high schools, Bengali was specifically retained as the medium of instruction in which other subjects besides literature would be taught.

Local Option

For the next seven years no further progress was made in the matter. An Assamese primer, earlier approved by the DPI was rejected by the chief commissioner whose action was endorsed by the lieutenant-governor on the ground that the committee passing the book had been influenced by the Bengali element and its supporters. Sir Stuart Bayley, the chief commissioner, in his Resolution on the Education Report, 1879-80, opened the question of modification of the system with the intention of “decreasing the difficulty of the Bengali course” and expressed desire for a reconciliation between the two interests. Obviously a conflict was visualized. But at the same time he observed that it should be the “endeavour to convince the people of the advantage of assimilating their cultivated speech as far as possible to the far more important, more highly developed language of the lower province.”¹⁵ The next chief commissioner, Sir Charles Elliot, referred to Sir Stuart's observations and asked for a matured project from the DPI. The same year, the Anglo-vernacular Text Book Committee at Nowgong which was appointed in 1878 after the Government of India's decision of 1877, recommended the retention of both the existing Bengali course and its contents for the middle English examinations till Assamese books were available.¹⁶

J Willson, DPI, also praised the then existing system as providing a sound instruction in Bengali.¹⁷ The government was more interested in educating people in Bengali and cared less for Assamese. The matter of replacing Bengali by Assamese in the schools of the Brahmaputra Valley was taken up by the DPI also in 1881.¹⁸ In conformity with the Government of India's Resolution No 101 dated 23 April 1877, that primary education should always be in the mother-tongue, it was decided in 1883 that Assamese could be introduced in the schools subject to the

availability of the textbooks which were, however, notified in DPI's Circular No 17 of 1885-86, and any aided school had the free option of taking up the full Assamese course.¹⁹

Within the next ten years, nine out of thirteen aided middle schools took up Assamese, three Bengali and one school was undecided. In eleven government middle schools, Bengali was the medium of instruction. In 1896, the DPI claimed that instruction through the medium of Bengali was more efficient than through Assamese. By that time, only two out of six government middle schools in the mofussils were, on petitions, allowed to introduce Assamese in 1897 and the remaining four preferred to retain Bengali.²⁰ As regards district headquarters schools, under orders of the chief commissioner Sir William E Ward, dated 10 November 1896 Assamese was to be introduced replacing Bengali with effect from February 1897. But the medium was to be Assamese if the parents and the guardians of the pupils of the schools so desired.²¹ Thus the principle of local option was surely adopted as a new one.

Analogy with Wales

Sir Henry J S Cotton's chief commissionership from 1896 to 1902 witnessed a very lengthy and thorough discussion of the whole question of Assamese language and its introduction in schools and inclusion in the university syllabus as a second language. Cotton had strong views on both these aspects of the question. As regards restoration of Assamese, he observed:

Every educated Assamese is bound to know Bengali just as every educated Welshman is bound to know English and the cry for the restoration of Assamese as the language of culture in this province is as hopeless as the agitation...for the official recognition of the Welsh language in Scotland. The tendency is all in one direction and the classical literature in Assam of which apparently little remains, will in due course, be placed in the category of the writings of Cadwallon or Fingul or Ossain. All efforts to boost up Assamese as a separate language are, I am convinced, doomed to failure.

Cotton however conceded that as Assamese was still then the vernacular of the masses of the province, it was the duty of the administration at least to afford the necessary encouragement in primary or even in the middle schools to that language, but in the case of higher education, he maintained that all such education must be imparted through the channel of Bengali and English. "Every day, Bengali tends to replace Assamese as the language of educated society and though it may be natural to patriotic Assamese to attempt to resist the flowing tide, the endeavour is a hopeless one," Cotton observed. His secretary, P G Melitus held a contrary view.

Cotton placed it on record as his own view that the closer Assam identified itself with Bengal, the province from which it was administratively

but an offshoot, the more rapid would be its progress and the greater the prosperity of its people. Melitus remarked that such a view would strike the people as novel and that they did not like to be swamped by Bengalees as the people of Bihar and Orissa had been under Bengal administration. But Cotton asserted, "When this truth is fully recognized in Assam, our schools may emulate the success of a generation ago when they were able to train up scholars like the late Anandaram Barooah." The move for recognition of Assamese as a second language in the university syllabus was also strongly opposed by him as well as by J Willson, DPI on the ground of absence of textbooks in the Assamese language. Cotton also thought that such a step would tend to weaken the links of union with Bengal which were to the advantage of the Assamese people themselves.²² But in fact those links catered to the needs of administration rather than the needs of the people in general.

Orders Misconstrued

The order of William Ward was implemented in February 1897. This was followed by the biggest ever protest memorial which 3366 persons signed. A counter memorial for extension of the scope of the order into high schools, inclusion of Assamese in the university syllabus and compulsory reading of Assamese books by Assamese boys was also presented. These steps, the counter memorialists claimed, would prevent the unhealthy interference of the Bengalees if the selection of language was left to the discretion of the headmasters or of the ignorant guardians.²³ The order of 1896 was clearly misconstrued as the parents and guardians of the pupils but not the headmasters were given any discretion in the matter. Cotton refused to enlarge the scope of Ward's order in his decision-dated 6 December 1897. The Bengalee petitioners had recognized the claim of Assamese and prayed for the instruction of the Bengalee boys in their own mother-tongue. But the government refused to undertake the teaching of both the vernaculars and asked them to make their own arrangements. Captain Gurdon's introduction of Assamese at his own initiative in Kamrup was not disapproved.²⁴ The DPI, Booth, construed by oversight the orders of the chief commissioner to have empowered him to introduce Assamese by his own desire only and in 1901, ordered the headmasters of Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Nowgong and Tezpur high schools to introduce the language. Certainly this served the cause of Assamese language well. Later on he pleaded guilty of indiscretion which appeared to have been condoned by the chief commissioner on 8 June 1901.²⁵ The same year, the Bengali residents of Tezpur prayed for the teaching of their children in Bengali in the lower classes. Their prayer was turned down and in protest they withdrew their children and started a school of their own. But the matter proceeded no further.

The next chief commissioner Sir J B Fuller disfavoured the continued instruction in Bengali. He adopted the view that the needs of the Assamese in Assam had to be preferred to those of the Bengalees.²⁶ This was a clear

deviation from the Government of India's policy which admitted of no preferential treatment but stressed the principle of education through the medium of mother-tongue; the principle was of course adopted long after the change in Assam's language had been made for the first time.

Voluminous opinions were received from district and sub-divisional officers as also from the commissioner of Assam Valley and private individuals, both Assamese and Bengalees, for and against the language as the medium of instruction. Some of the representative opinions are summarized here.

The commissioner of Assam Valley generally agreed with Fuller but favoured some relaxation for Bengali in consideration of large numbers of 'intelligent' Bengali population in a few places. He also observed that "in giving instruction in Assamese instead of Bengali, we are sacrificing something of efficiency. I have no doubt that a better education can be given through the medium of Bengali." He was in doubt about textbooks being written on demand and commented that "at any rate, the Assamese textbooks will probably be inferior to those which will be available in Bengali". British officers' preference in the matter had always been ignored in all discussions about Assam's language problem and the Bengali aspect had been overemphasized.

Fuller, but Not Complete

Fuller deviated again both from the existing arrangement and the university regulation as he ordered on 14 August 1903 that

in future in the Assam Valley excluding Goalpara district, Bengali will not be taught as a second language for the university entrance examination nor (subject to possible exception at Gauhati) will it be used as a medium of instruction in classes below the fourth. These orders should apply to aided schools as well to government high schools, and mutatis mutandis, to middle schools.

So that the Bengali teachers might not suffer, the chief commissioner decided to transfer them gradually either to Goalpara or to Surma Valley. In consideration of the inconvenience that might be felt by the Bengalees, he was prepared to help them financially if they wanted to have schools for their boys upto the fourth class. Thus the principle of local option was narrowed down practically to a nullity. As regards textbooks, he was certain that such books would be written if there was a demand for them. Paucity of suitable textbooks was however still a problem. Apparently Fuller's orders had solved the problem except in Goalpara. But Goalpara defied such simplification as Fuller's formula and in course of time the problem of language in the district with a dominant Bengali population got intricately mixed with Assam politics.

The deputy commissioner of Goalpara was strongly opposed to the Assamese language as "practically only Bengali is here spoken." He thought that "it is very little use fostering a language like Assamese, spoken as it is, by only 30,00,000 and absolutely useless outside the five districts of

Upper and Middle Assam. It would be far better that Assamese as a language should cease to exist and that Bengali should take its place." This was an extreme view indeed, never expressed by any advocate of the Bengali language. He also observed that for a really thorough education, a thorough knowledge of Bengali was necessary and Assamese had practically no literature ancient or modern and no newspapers, scientific books or novels. Early familiarization of the Assamese boys with the Bengali language and instruction in Bengali can "best give them what is wanting in their own".²⁷ Side by side with the extreme views of Goalpara's chief commissioner and the deputy commissioner, we find a spirit of compromise which was best illustrated in a resolution passed in a Dibrugarh meeting held in 1903 under the chairmanship of an Assamese, Jaduram Baruah. Bengalees present there had no objection to Assamese being introduced in the schools of Assam if Bengali was not altogether excluded. Also the Assamese did not object to Bengali remaining as a second language if arrangement could be made to teach them separately.²⁸ In 1905, the Calcutta University recognized Assamese as a second language for the entrance examination.²⁹ Thus the problem now boiled down to a mutual tolerance at least in a vocal section of the Brahmaputra Valley, but unfortunately this was a feeble voice.

Goalpara Debate

The controversy in Goalpara went on. On 19 February 1912 a resolution for introduction of Assamese in certain schools of the Goalpara sub-division on an experimental basis was moved by a Bengali gentleman and passed by a majority of votes. It was opposed on the ground that the change of a language was a matter of policy to be determined by the educational authorities. It may be recollected here that according to the existing orders of 1896, local option was a prerequisite to any such change. Protest memorials were sent by some Bengalees. The cause of Assamese was interestingly taken up by a gentleman of Jorhat who sent a petition along with a booklet in Assamese, pleading for its introduction there. It was thus no longer a district issue. Accepting his secretary's advice, the chief commissioner sent him a reply only expressing interest in the progress of the language and passed no orders to modify the existing arrangement. A lengthy debate however ensued among the high officials. Both sides quoted ethnic, linguistic and political history of Assam in favour of their claims. The most hair-splitting arguments came from Lieutenant Colonel P R T Gurdon, commissioner, Assam Valley. He extremely complicated the problem by injecting into it types of dialects spoken, religious conversion and utilization of the ignorant Muslims by the Bengali Hindus and pleaded the cause of Assamese.

J R Cunningham, the D P I tried to meet the arguments of Gurdon by quoting from the same sources as those of the latter and concluded that Goalpara belonged to Bengal and Bengali should be its vernacular. Even admitting a greater affinity of Assamese language with the language

evolved by local usages, he would not agree to divide the district linguistically "with Bengali as the court and school language in the west and Assamese in the east." Observing that the sub-divisional boundaries shown on the map did not conform to the actual distribution of the respective language group, he suggested that a correction would involve interchange of certain places between the two sub-divisions of Goalpara and Dhubri. This was perhaps the first clear expression in India of the principle of linguistic redistribution of administrative units. Cunningham further commented that all the ethnological, historical, and linguistic arguments and the decision of some ignorant people could not decide the issue but only indicated their respective social and political sympathies. Thus he was opposed to transformation of the problem into a field of public agitation led by persons well acquainted with Bengali, English and Assamese.

This debate was concluded by chief commissioner Sir Archdale Earle in his order dated 16 January 1914, deciding that the medium of instruction "in schools of all classes throughout the Goalpara district should be either Assamese or Bengali at the option of the majority of the villagers interested", thus specifically extending the principle of local option to Goalpara.³⁰ In an explanatory tone, the chief commissioner rejected Colonel Gurdon's suggestion to allow the deputy commissioner or a European officer or a particular Assamese gentleman to go round the villages to ascertain the wishes of the parents. His suggestion to allow the deputy commissioner to determine any dispute regarding the language was also not accepted. The chief commissioner directed that no change would be allowed unless it was applied for and granted. He was anxious that such approved change should be effected as quickly as possible and that "greatest possible care should be taken not to stir up faction or feeling in the district". Now the majority of the villagers and not necessarily only parents and guardians of the pupils could decide the language as medium of instruction.

Islamic Instruction

But this uniformity of policy could not be worked out as by this time the Muslims had become vocal about their separate interests and demanded the introduction of an Islamic course of studies. The Muhammadan Education Conference of 1914 had recommended the introduction of an Islamic course but did not favour instruction in Urdu in ordinary lower primary schools. In the government policy enunciated in Education Department Notification No 41 of 27 September 1915, it was decided that as an experiment, facilities would be provided for the teaching of Koran in ordinary vernacular schools. For further popularizing the schools amongst the Muslims, the teaching of Urdu as an optional subject for the Muslim pupils was permitted.³¹

Another factor came into play within a few years. For some time the leaders of Goalpara were trying for reunion of the district with Bengal from which it was severed in 1874. Raja Prabhat Chandra Barua of

Gauripur, one of the supporters of the demand, had taken pride in calling himself an Assamese at the time of formation of the Assam Association at the beginning of the century. But his view, as of many others, changed soon. The famous Ninth Despatch shows that during the controversy over the extension of the scope of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms to Assam, the same Prabhat Chandra Barua submitted on behalf of the zamindars of Goalpara a very lengthy memorial to the chief commissioner of Assam requesting him for transfer of the district to Bengal. One of his arguments was that "the people of Goalpara, with a small exception speak the Bengali language and their manners and customs are the same as those of the people of northern Bengal." Further, according to him, 440,408 out of a total population of 600,643 spoke Bengali; the "predominant written language is Bengali"; there was an increase of one and a half lakhs in the Bengali population since the 1911 census and "that as regards history, tradition, social and religious customs and folk music, the people of the district of Goalpara have very little in common with the people of the other districts of Assam." The Hindus were interested in transfer, the Muslims emphasized Islamic education.

Minorities, Secular and Religious

The conference of education officers held in 1921 recommended the establishment of thirty-one schools for the children of the immigrant Muslims, twelve immediately and the rest later. They also recommended the addition of Urdu to the elementary course of Islamic instruction. A primary school with only Muslim boys was to be called *Muktab*. Each school would have two teachers, one for vernacular and the other a *Maulvi*. Further, the schools would be directly under the control of the government and not of the local boards. The D P I objected to the introduction of Urdu as running counter to the recommendation of 1914. He was also against appointment of a separate teacher for religious instruction at state expense and to the provincialization of those schools as primary schools were already under the local boards. He advocated the policy of equal treatment to all Muslims, immigrants or others, in both the valleys.³² Clearly the evolution of a sound education policy, both secular and religious, brooked no delay.

The government policy as expressed by B C Allan, commissioner, Assam Valley, was to assimilate these Muslims to the native population. So far as Goalpara and the Muslims, the bulk of whom were Bengali immigrants, were concerned, it became impossible for government to pursue a straightforward policy. Allan said that "the instruction should be in Assamese which is of the country of their adoption." But he cautiously suggested "the use of Assamese where it was not strongly objected to and did not influence the immigrants against sending their children to schools". The government decided generally to endorse the commissioner's views. But where a school was situated in the midst of the immigrant bustees, the language of instruction would be the vernacular of the

immigrants. In other places of Assamese predominance, the language would be Assamese, each case being decided on merit. This only conformed to the policy of local option.⁸³ But the problem was now coloured by religious and racial sentiments.

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, education became a transferred subject and the matter came to members of the legislative council for decision. The general policy already enunciated was not tampered with. But the education minister, Rai Bahadur Promode Chandra Dutta, a Bengalee from Surma Valley decided on 27 October 1923 that "where local opinion is substantially strong, provision should be made for teaching in both the languages." He also allowed the local boards' discretion to have Assamese or Bengali or both the languages in their schools. Syed Muhammad Saadulla, the next education minister, an Assam Valley Muslim also accepted this view but according to him, application for change of language had to come from the villagers and not merely from the parents and guardians of the pupils. He also denied school committees the power to determine the language. The Goalpara local board's resolution noted earlier was not however undone.

Two Conflicting Attitudes

Saadulla's view created complications. Differences of opinion regarding the meaning of majority and the procedure of determining the majority wishes took another five years to be settled. In 1925 Saadulla admitted in reply to a question in the legislative council that "Goalpara is a bilingual district" and asserted that the government policy of 1914 was still being followed. On receipt of allegations of partiality and propaganda in favour of Assamese language by Assamese officers, the government in 1927 asked all officers to maintain a neutral attitude to the language controversy. Saadulla then brought the matter to the notice of the governor Sir L. Hammond, as he thought the whole question involved a vital and important policy of government.⁸⁴ The governor accepted Saadulla's views as sound and deplored the continuous agitations on language in the Goalpara district when the need of the hour was the removal of illiteracy. As regards both the languages being taught in the same school, he ordered on 30 January 1929 that a minority demanding an extra teacher would have to bear the expenses. He would not also allow the chairman of the local board to change a language without previously taking expert opinion of the Education Department who would take "every step possible to ascertain the wishes of the majority of the villagers or persons." The local board would have to ensure such consultation.⁸⁵ This decision put the minority, which the Assamese claimed was constituted by the Bengalees, to a disadvantage.

At this stage, Chandradhar Barooah, secretary, Jorhat Sarbajanik Sabha in a memorial, lamented that the Assamese language was being driven out of local board schools in Goalpara district and appealed to the governor for action. In a counter memorial, Saifur Rahman, ex-member

of the Assam legislative council, member, Goalpara local board and president, Anjuman-i-Islamia, Goalpara, challenged Barooah's contention and said that "the language of the division is no doubt Assamese, but Bengali is the prevailing language of the district which requires as much protection as any other language." He also complained of unauthorized changes in language—and the complaint seemed partially corroborated by the necessity of government's cautioning their officers and the governor's laying down of rigid restriction on change of language—and that the Sabha was trying to exterminate Bengali root and branch from Goalpara. He also claimed that an enquiry would prove the existence of a systematic campaign for imposition of Assamese on the Bengalees. This has for long been a persistently typical example of the two attitudes involved in the language controversy in Assam.⁸⁶

In 1937, the Brahmaputra Valley had a total of 3307 primary schools against 3559 in Surma Valley. Of these, Goalpara had 723, the largest number second only to Kamrup. Altogether 278 schools of all classes in the Brahmaputra Valley continued to impart education in Bengali, 267 in Goalpara alone.⁸⁷ During the next decade, as represented by the Bengalees to the States Reorganization Commission and claimed in the assembly on 17 November 1955, the number of Bengali primary school in Goalpara had dwindled to three by that year. In this context a statement made by Phani Bora, a veteran Assamese communist leader at a press conference at Gauhati on 27 May 1954 is worth quoting. He said: "The Assam government, through their official and non-official agents forcibly sealed off all Bengali schools in Goalpara district denying safeguards of the Bengalees' cultural and linguistic rights. Such imperialist and reactionary actions of the Assam Congress government were responsible for encouraging disintegrating elements in Assam."

Same Old Problem

In 1937, the Calcutta University introduced vernacular as a medium of instruction in the matriculation examination. Naturally, there was a just demand for Assamese as a medium of instruction in Assamese high schools. The education minister of the first popular ministry under the Government of India Act, 1935, led by Saadulla, stated in the assembly on 4 August 1937 that funds were provided for the production of suitable Assamese textbooks, due to paucity of which the introduction of Assamese as a medium had to be postponed—the same old argument after 32 years! But he asserted that Bengali vernacular as a medium had been introduced right away.⁸⁸ Assamese was recognized by the Calcutta University as a subject in M A examination in 1938. As admitted by Sir Saadulla, the premier in 1940, Assamese had become the medium of instruction in the Brahmaputra Valley except Goalpara and the Bengali schools both in the middle and secondary levels. At the same time however, Rohini Kumar Chaudhury, the education minister, stated that Bengali schools were being started in Nowgong.⁸⁹ The old problem of suitable

textbooks in Assamese remained unsolved and translations from Bengali books had to be used. In 1941, a Brahmaputra Valley Assamese member asked in the provincial legislature : "Are the government aware of the undesirability of introducing translations of Bengali books where original Assamese books are available?" Rohini Kumar Chaudhury replied: "Yes, if the original Assamese books are at least as good as the translations of Bengali books."⁴⁰ During the war years, the question of language was more or less dormant.

At the time of partition, the Assamese constituted much below fifty per cent of the total population of the province.

One of the reasons why the Assamese supported the separation of Sylhet was that they would be able to establish the domination of their language. Immediately after partition, Assamese leaders became more vocal about the position of their language and culture and demanded the introduction of Assamese in the province as a whole and declaration of it as the state language.⁴¹

On 26 September 1947, the Bardalai government directed that "Assamese is accepted as compulsory second language in all schools where it cannot be Assamese completely." To the Bengalees' complaint of government's partiality in the matter and imposition of Assamese on them, Gopinath Bardalai, the chief minister replied on 23 March 1948 in the Assembly:

If you just analyze the population of Assam, you will find there is hardly any community in Assam which may be called the majority community. I do not know whether this fact is known...In Assam there is no community which may be called a majority community in which the population of one community is predominantly more than the population of another community...As I said, there are hardly any minorities in the province and that is, I suppose, to the best interests of the province. Nobody can rule over anybody on account of the number of any community and that has probably been one of the reasons why we have lived in such peace and unity.⁴²

Back to Square One

But participating in the debate on a cut motion moved in the Assembly in 1948 to raise a discussion on the question of alleged imposition of Assamese and protection of Bengali language in Goalpara, Nitmoni Phukan made a categorical assertion on 29 March 1948 on the basis of the chief minister's statement that Assam would not be a bilingual state. He said: "This question of protecting the Bengali-speaking minority of Goalpara district cannot arise." Again he emphasized that it was clear from one end of the country to the other that the

geographical territory of Assam can no longer be disturbed on any other ground of linguistic basis of any minority community ...

Regarding our language, Assamese must be the state language of the

province (hear, hear). There can be no gainsaying on it even if the government stand or fall on it. (hear, hear). So the question of languages is solved once for all. The question of languages for the minority communities in Assam is also solved ... At least Assamese people as a whole will not and cannot tolerate any other language or culture imposed on theirs. All the languages of different communities and their culture will be absorbed in Assamese culture ... We, the Assamese people will resist to a man and will never allow any other language to establish permanently as the state language in Assam.

Claiming to speak with authority in the matter regarding the mind of the people, he asserted, "We will have Assamese alone as our state language and the state cannot nourish any other language in this province."^{4 8}

Bardalai's assurances and assertions were not honoured by his successors and the good work of the past was undone. The Assamese language was restored to the position it deserved. The States Reorganization Commission prescribed a population percentage of seventy or more for any state to be unilingual and distinctly admitted the multilingual composition of Assam. Thus all the happenings in connection with the language during the last twenty-eight years, too well known to be recounted here, were totally unwarranted from any reasonable point of view. It may be of interest to note that Sarat Chandra Sinha, present chief minister of Assam, had expressed the same view as Phukan in 1948. But he had to witness the worst ever manifestation of the language malaise in 1972 and is yet to fulfil the aspiration so vehemently expressed then. Suffice it to say that the language question has become a favourite expediency of the politicians and has to be settled *de novo*.

¹ H K Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company*, p 46.

² *Ibid.*, p 266.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Assam Secretariat File (hereinafter abbreviated as ASF) No. 171G of 1874, No 1.

⁵ Mill's Report, Appendix J.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Bengal Government Resolution dated 19 April 1873 on introduction of Assamese language.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ ASF No. Home A, November 1896, Nos. 142-43.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ ASF No 145G of 1881, p 35.

¹⁹ ASF No. Home A, November 1896, Nos. 142-43; Edn-B, March 1883.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

- 22 ASF No. Home A, December 1897, No. 50-54, Nos. 50 and 53.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 ASF No. Home A, December 1901, Nos. 28-33.
- 25 *Ibid.*, note dated 8 June 1901.
- 26 ASF No. Home A, August 1903, Nos. 52-57, 55.
- 27 *Ibid.*, No 61.
- 28 *Ibid.*, No 75.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p 8.
- 30 ASF No. Education A, January 1914; Nos. 92-98 and Education A, March 1929, Nos. 28-33.
- 31 ASF No. Education A, May 1921, Nos. 126-30.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 ASF No. Education A, March 1929, Nos. 28-33.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p p 2-3.
- 36 *Ibid.*, No 30.
- 37 Assam Gazette (hereinafter AG) 1937, Vol VI, pp 1839-40.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p 123.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 1940 Vol. VI, p 1742.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 1941, Vol. VI, pp 464-65,
- 41 M Kar, "Muslims in Assam Politics", *North Eastern Affairs*, Shillong, July-December 1973, pp 19-20.
- 42 AG 1948 Vol. VI, pp 488-89.
- 43 *Ibid.*, pp 581-82.

ARCHANA MANDAL

The Sonthal Problem in Nineteenth-century Bengal

BASED ON contemporary official and non-official sources this article is addressed to an analysis of the measures adopted by Sir George Campbell, Bengal's lieutenant-governor between 1871 and 1874, to tackle the explosive situation in the Sonthal Parganas in the second half of the nineteenth century. Campbell's approach, marked by a compassion for the Sonthals, victims of landlord-moneylender exploitation, strikes a refreshing contrast with that of his predecessors in office. The sympathy for the Sonthals provoked the wrath of the propertied classes of Bengal who ranged themselves against the lieutenant-governor. In the collision that followed, the landed gentry received tacit support from Lord Northbrook, the viceroy, and Duke of Argyll, the secretary of state. Consequently, pragmatic approach notwithstanding, Campbell failed to bring about a lasting solution to the problems of the Sonthals.

The region called the Sonthal Parganas had been administered under what was known as the Regulation System for a period of more than fifty years. The government resolved to constitute it as a Non-regulation district¹ following the Sonthal insurrection in 1855. The insurrection which posed an ominous threat to British imperialism is sometimes compared to the Mutiny of 1857 two years later and the forty-year-long Wahabi rebellion.²

In 1855, after the disturbances were quelled, Act XXXVII of 1855 came into force, excluding the Sonthal territory from the purview of most of the general regulations and laws. With further legislation, the Sonthal Parganas were ruled on the purest Non-regulation System, conferring special protection on its inhabitants.³ A very simple form of administration was introduced, bringing the village headmen, as representatives of the people, to direct contact with the English officer in charge of the district. The British system of justice and government was adopted to the needs of the Sonthals who for some time at least were considered among "the most prosperous of the Indian races."⁴ The formation of the Non-regulation district was also hailed as a milestone of development, with the name Santal appearing on the map of India.⁵ Sir John Peter Grant, the second lieutenant-governor of Bengal, was also known for his sympathy for the Sonthal cause.⁶

Policy in Reversal

Years later, when the memory of the insurrection had faded, a question arose whether the Stamp Law could be enforced in the Sonthal Parganas.⁷ The then lieutenant-governor Cecil Beadon seemed to have taken a view different from that of Sir John. It was decided that the sooner the regular laws were introduced the better, and the decision was promptly put into practice. The Sonthal *manjhis* (headmen) were declared to have no claim to special privilege and their rents were raised.⁸ Beadon held that the Sonthal Parganas should be administered in the same way as the rest of the province. These instructions and views held sway for the years that followed: the Sonthal Parganas came to be administered under the Regulation System's rules and procedures like the Rent Law, the Civil Procedure Code, the Stamp Law and other statutes. The district's deputy commissioner was for all practical purposes reduced to a judicial officer.⁹ Money, the commissioner of Bhagulpore and Sonthal Parganas at the time, stated his views on the manjhi question thus: "To recognize as inherent to their position a right of occupancy would be not only acting contrary to the provisions of Act X, but would thus perpetuate a mode of tenure which may in time prove unsuited to the improvement and progress of the country."¹⁰ He did not believe that the Sonthal peasants required any special protection against enhancement of their rent: "The main point to be kept in view is that the rights of the zamindars and ryots are the same in the Sonthal Parganas as they are outside."¹¹ Sir William Grey's Sonthal policy was identical with that of his predecessor. Under Beadon and Grey the administration of the Sonthal Parganas tended to conform to that of the Regulation districts, the more so with the application of Penal Code, Civil Procedure Code, Stamp Law and Act X of 1859¹².

During Campbell's administration the Sonthal country was once again in a state of ferment. In his *Memoirs*, Campbell wrote that before he had been long in office the British government was concerned about

riotous outbreaks among the Sonthals. The 1855 insurrection was a reminder and that action was not to be put off lest matters took a turn for the worse.¹³ In the summer of 1871 the Sonthal unrest was brought to the notice of Campbell. It was reported that agitated Sonthals of several parganas were contemplating a visit to Dumka. Massive crowds gathered to make tumultuous scenes before the British local officers or collected in the jungles in the pattern of the customary hunting parties¹⁴. Campbell had reason to believe that there was enough provocation for the protest demonstrations.¹⁵ At this time, the agitation was not confined to Dumka,¹⁶ as unmistakable signs of unrest were coming from the Godda sub-division.¹⁷ The *Hindoo Patriot* stated: "We are now informed that it has played among the Sonthals of the Regulation zillah, Moorshedabad".¹⁸ An earlier issue of the same journal noted "the late incipient rising of the Sonthals by holding an assembly near the railway station at Moorari, beating drums and showing other signs of discontent, led us to make some inquiries as to their alleged grievances".¹⁹ The tribals intended to march on all the divisional headquarters, even as far as Bhagulpore with the avowed intention of obtaining redress of grievances. Their main complaint was that many of their manghis had been deprived of their traditional rights. The rents for the lease of villages were raised, and manjhis found themselves dispossessed when they disagreed on the expiry of the leases to renew them at the excessive rates imposed.²⁰

Storm Warning

It was reported that 500 to 600 Bengalees of the Mahespore district had left their homes and passed through to Jangipore in fear of the Sonthals.²¹ The inhabitants of the district had retained a vivid recollection of the atrocities committed during the rebellion of 1855.²² The railway volunteers turned out to meet the danger. The Raja of Mahespore, Gopal Singh, took immediate steps to allay panic by reassuring the ryots who stayed back and persuading those who fled to return to the villages so that in two or three days the alarm subsided.²³ Deputy commissioner Wood proceeded to Moral to ascertain the cause of the panic. He had an interview with some *parganait*s and gave them assurances that Dumka Sonthals' complaints were being considered by the government. At the same time he told them that large gatherings massed for the purpose of intimidating government officers would not be tolerated and would only weaken their case. The Dumka gathering had without doubt been the primary cause of the panic. The *parganait*s assured their cooperation to allay the panic. This set at rest the Bengalees' nagging fear of a repetition of the 1855 outbreak. The scare persisted for months, repeated gatherings of Sonthals giving rise to considerable uneasiness.²⁴

The *Hindoo Patriot* described the discontent of the Sonthals: "The cause is said to be arbitrary enhancement of rent by some zamindars at a rate which is beyond their means to meet".²⁵ This pro-landlord newspaper also did not fail to defend the zamindars: "Some of our contemporaries

who have commented on the subject are mistaken in thinking that it is some Bengali zamindars whose illegal exactions have driven the Sonthals to desperation.”²⁶

The *Friend of India*, a Baptist journal, was however sympathetic to the grievances of the Sonthals :

The grievance is not political, but social, not one of those facts which a government can at once seize upon and remove by remedial laws, but one of those unwoven of the people. After the insurrection of 1855 certain measures were taken... These measures, we believe, have entirely failed to secure anything like protection to the Sonthals. After the defeat of the insurrection the land gradually fell to the Bengali zamindars, who, if the Sonthal account be true, have been for many years carrying on a system of oppression. The zamindars are assisted by a race of *mahajans* (moneylenders) who charge an exorbitant interest, simple and compound. Of course, it would be very difficult for any government to reach this evil by direct legislation.

This newspaper further stated that although the attention of the commissioner and the deputy commissioner of Bhagulpore was drawn to the facts: they promised to give the matter their consideration and indeed gave some preliminary orders but without much effect. The social oppression had reached to such a degree that it was no longer bearable. The paper warned, “if government cannot take some step we shall soon have a deplorable insurrection”²⁷. In fact the missionaries continued to criticize the zamindars’ and government’s inhuman action on the ground that it was tending to perpetuate certain evil customs. Another article appeared three months later on the usurious practices of the mahajans.²⁸

Missionaries and Government

On the other hand, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the pro-landlord newspaper, charged the Christian missionaries for inciting a rebellious spirit among the Sonthals.²⁹ The *Saptahik Samachar* blamed Campbell: “He has now gone so far as to be ready to make grants to missionaries from the public treasury for the purpose of imparting Christian instruction to the people”.³⁰ An identical opinion was expressed in the *Bharat Sangaskarak*.³¹ The missionaries who had worked in the Sonthal Parganas were conscious of the feelings of the Sonthals. They sympathized with the Sonthals and always stood by the side of these aboriginal tribes against the moneyed classes, revenue farmers and land grabbers. In spite of the failure of the missionaries to gain their main object, they made lasting contributions towards the social progress of Bengal. A remarkable book named *Horkoren Mare Hapranko reak Katha* was dedicated by the Sonthal Guru, Kolean Haram, to a missionary, L O Skrefsrud in 1871. Kolean Haram died before he could complete the account and a *Cela Jugla Haram* dictated the section which deals with rebellion.³² It cannot however be denied that their friend-of-the-Sonthal stance was actuated by a motive: to take advantage of the unrest for proselytizing purposes.

The *Indian Daily News*, the liberal newspaper, fully supported the cause of the Sonthals: "The Sonthals are in an unsettled state at present... and the old story of oppression by the native mahajans has again cropped up".³³ According to Allen who was intimately connected with the Sonthals of Birbhum, the Sonthals had good reasons for discontent in the fraudulent and oppressive conduct they experienced from the Bengalees with whom they had intercourse, and this, with the recollection of what they had done in 1854 and the courage they had then shown, prepared the minds of all to accept on the slightest rumour the prospect of a second outbreak. The general complaint was of an unjust enhancement of rent by the landowners and the exaction of unwarrantable *abwabs* and *salamees* from Sonthal cultivators. The Sonthals showed no hostility to the English. They regarded the Bengalees as their enemies and were loyal to English authority.³⁴ A recent study has thus analyzed the problem:

The anti-government feeling had a deeper source. The Sonthals had been long complaining of the exactions by monylanders and zamindars without any success in persuading the government to take any measure to stop them. On the contrary, when sheer desperation led the Sonthals to use violent means for finding a remedy, government promptly punished them.³⁵

Roots of Discontent

The threat to the stability of the Sonthal village community came from the zamindar or his representative the *izaradar* who made a settlement as usual with the manjhi for a *pattah* but afterwards took possession for himself of a portion of the best land and exacted a full rent as before.³⁶ Colonel E A Rowlett, the deputy commissioner of Maunbhoom, informed Colonel E T Dalton, the commissioner of Chotonagpur, that the origin and cause of all contention between the Sonthals and the zamindars was no doubt the desire of the latter to enhance the rents of the ryots and the determination of the Sonthals to resist them to the utmost. The zamindars thought that they were entitled to receive a higher rent while the Sonthals believed that all attempts at enhancement for whatever cause were to be resisted. Thus there was no hope of an amicable understanding and the deputy commissioner thought that the time had come when the government should intervene and put a stop to the contention between the parties.³⁷ The rent question appeared to be the greatest question of the day, and one which if not soon settled might have led to very serious consequences.³⁸ In fact such was their abhorrence of rent that they did not mind throwing up settled cultivation which their strenuous labour for years made possible.³⁹ Moreover the exactions of the police and revenue officials and the insults and indignities they suffered from Englishmen goaded them into rebellion. The dishonour to their women by the *sahiblok* specially irritated them.⁴⁰

Campbell was of the opinion that the rent difficulties in the Sonthal Parganas were caused by the change of the system of administration. It

himself to give them certain assurances. Campbell at the same time felt that extreme caution was necessary.⁴⁷ He believed that the only real satisfactory course would be to put the whole matter in the hands of an officer acting on general principles laid down for his guidance.⁴⁸ Browne Wood in 1873 was chosen to carry out the first settlement of the district, a task which it was held, could only be performed by "an able and judicious officer". Browne Wood amply justified his selection. His settlement gave the Sonthals fixity of rents, stability of tenure and the preservation of their village community system.⁴⁹ It restrained the zamindars from interfering with the management and internal economy of the villages.⁵⁰ John Boxwell who officiated as deputy commissioner stated, "Probably no other officer so well adapted for carrying out Sir George Campbell's policy could have been selected."⁵¹

Exception to Rules

The *Indian Daily News* fully supported Campbell's steps "in a province so peculiarly situated as the Sonthals" and struck a note of warning: "It is another feature of the new Indian danger... the Sonthals are calling out against the exactions of the zamindars. How will it be when not only they but all the rural population come to call out against the exactions and oppressions of the government itself?"⁵²

Campbell proceeded to effect a settlement of the parganas by a network of settlement officers untrammelled by detailed procedure. They were asked to record the rights of all parties concerned. The lieutenant-governor further recommended that the Sonthal Parganas should be removed from the operation of the laws applicable generally to Bengal. The best mode of achieving this end was by bringing the parganas within the scope of Act 33, Victoria, Chapter 3.⁵³ This Act was intended for the government of newly-acquired or other territories to which the provisions of the Indian Councils Act, 1861, were unsuited or in regard to which from the existence of exceptional circumstances it was inexpedient to pass laws under the machinery provided by the earlier Act.⁵⁴ The Government of India entirely acquiesced in Campbell's view that something should be done to remove the parganas from the operation of the laws applicable generally to the lower provinces of the Bengal Presidency. The governor-general-in-council agreed to bring the area within the scope of Act 33 (Vic., ch.3). This measure having received the approval of the secretary of the state, a notification was issued announcing the extension of the Act to the Sonthal Parganas.⁵⁵

It was well known that the 1855 Sonthal rebellion was mainly caused by the usurious transactions.⁵⁶ Once in the clutches of usurers, the men and their families became bond slaves.⁵⁷ A law was therefore enacted to control usury, incorporating the demands on which the Sonthals had made their most bitter complaint.⁵⁸ It was stated that no moneylender was to be permitted to take interest at a rate higher than 2 per cent per month in spite of any agreement to the contrary, and no compound interest

of Campbell as arbitrary and one-sided. They were against the lieutenant-governor exempting the Sonthal area from the Regulation System. *The Hindoo Patriot* asked:

The government may place the Sonthal territory beyond the pale of the Regulations, but is it justified in placing it beyond the reach of the cardinal principles of right and justice? Are we to understand that the past administrators did not do their duty to the ryots in the Sonthal territory?... What has become of the special commission for the settlement of rights appointed under Mr Dampier's Act of 1870? As we read it, it clearly amounts to a confiscation of landlord rights.⁶⁸

Stray Sparks of Liberalism

In contrast to the carping and critical attitude of the pro-landlord newspapers the editor of the *Tumlook Patrika* expressed liberal views: "One or two of his (Campbell's) resolutions have been truly beneficial to the country. Although he cannot say that his contemporaries have no right to speak in the matter, still he sees no cause for alarm in the present instance."⁶⁹ *The Hindoo Patriot* admitted:

There is only one section in the Regulation which promises redress in suits between proprietors themselves...The courts established under Act VI of 1871 are empowered to find and determine the rights of zamindars and other proprietors as between themselves, if any suit affecting such rights be pending at the time when this Regulation shall come into operation, or if a suit or issue be referred to the court under the provisions of section 5 or if a suit or issue be brought to contest the finding or record of the settlement officer within three years from the date of the said publication or of the final order of the revenue court. But no such suit shall be brought in any court after the expiration of three years from such date. If in any such suit it shall be found that the finding of the settlement officer is erroneous the records shall be amended accordingly.⁷⁰

The social outlook of the landed classes remained basically conservative. This conservative landlord intelligentsia feared that in course of its operation the new settlement would tend to destroy the established aristocracy or to bring out important changes in society. This landholding class jealously guarded the rights and privileges which it had secured under the Permanent Settlement. Predictably enough, it could not welcome the changes in the Sonthal Parganas. Despite the sneers of conservative die-hards Campbell was determined to take radical steps which his predecessors had cautiously avoided.

The arrangements in Sonthal Parganas did not touch the permanent settlement of the government revenue. It was designed to protect the aboriginal races from the rack-renting of alien zamindars. Under the settlement, villages were demarcated, and the rents of all occupiers were recorded. In all cases provision was made against further enhancement

attending the settlement operations and partly from the Kharwar movement. Disaffection manifested itself in the resistance to the payment of rent and by attempts to form a kind of political organization.⁷⁹ As a result, during the administration of Temple, discontent tended to deepen, exploding into the revolt of 1880-81.

Campbell's ideas on tribal agrarian reform came in conflict with the colonial interests of the British Indian government on the one hand and the class interests of the Indian landlords and moneylenders on the other. Quite naturally it was not possible for him to carry his liberal ideas to any logical conclusion. His failure underlines the fact that the system which raises a propertied class of exploiters from among the colonial subjects is found to be on the side of property and privilege when it comes to a class conflict. Idealists like Campbell, who worked within the framework of the colonial system were hamstrung, in spite of their good intentions, best efforts and administrative power, even in implementing a liberal programme of tribal-agrarian reform.

[I am grateful to K K Sen Gupta, Rabindra Bharati University, who read an earlier draft and made valuable comments.]

- ¹ Judicial Progs, Bengal, June 1872, No 197.
- ² Suproakash-Roy, *Bharatar Krishok Bidroha O Ganatantrik Sangram* (in Bengali), Vol 1, First Edition, July 1966, pp 310, 339.
- ³ *Bengal Administration Report 1871-72*, Political, p 42.
- ⁴ W W Hunter, *The Indian Empire*, Indian Reprint, 1973, p 98.
- ⁵ W G Archar and Verrier Elvin, in *Man in India*, Ramesh Chandra Roy (Ed.) Vol 25, 1945, p 222.
- ⁶ Judicial Progs, Bengal, December 1871, No 161.
- ⁷ *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, Political, p 42.
- ⁸ Judicial Progs, Bengal, December 1871, No 161.
- ⁹ *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, Political, p 42.
- ¹⁰ Judicial Progs, Bengal, July 1871; No 160, Appendix C.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix B.
- ¹² Judicial Progs, Bengal, June 1872, No 197.
- ¹³ Sir George Campbell, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, Sir Charles E Bernard (Ed.) Vol II, Macmillan, London and New York 1893, p 218.
- ¹⁴ *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, p 17.
- ¹⁵ Sir George Campbell, *op. cit.*, p 130.
- ¹⁶ *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, p 17.
- ¹⁷ L S S O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteer, Santal Parganas*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta 1919, p 57.
- ¹⁸ *The Hindoo Patriot*, 20 November 1871.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 August 1871.
- ²⁰ Judicial Progs, Bengal, December 1871, No 159-160.
- ²¹ *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, Political, p 42.
- ²² L S S O' Malley, *op. cit.*, p 57.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p 58.
- ²⁴ *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, Political, p 42.
- ²⁵ *The Hindoo Patriot*, 20 November 1871.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 28 August 1871.
- ²⁷ *Friend of India*, 15 February 1872.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9 May 1872.

- 29 *Amrita Baazr Patrika*, 26 February 1874.
- 30 Report in Native Newspapers (hereinafter R N P) for week ending 26 July 1873.
- 31 1 August 1873; R N P for week ending 16 July 1873.
- 32 WJ Culshaw and W G Archar in *Man in India*, Vol 26, Ramesh Chandra Roy (Ed.) 1945, p 229.
- 33 *Indian Daily News*, 22 August 1871.
- 34 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1872, No 27; O'Malley, *Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Sikkim*, Cambridge University Press, 1917, p 194.
- 35 Benoy B Chowdhury, "Agrarian Relations in Bengal, 1859-1885", *The History of Bengal, 1757-1905*, N K Sinha (Ed.), Calcutta 1967, pp 283-84.
- 36 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1872, No 27.
- 37 Revenue Progs, Bengal, June 1872, No 48.
- 38 Judicial Progs, Bengal, December 1871, No 152; Appendix B.
- 39 Benoy B Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, p 283.
- 40 R C Majumdar (Ed.), *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part I, 1963, p 457.
- 41 *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, Political, p 42.
- 42 *Ibid.*, pp 42-43.
- 43 Judicial Progs, Bengal, December 1871, No 161.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 Sir George Campbell, *op. cit.*, p 218.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p 200.
- 47 *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, p 18.
- 48 *Ibid.*, Political, p 43.
- 49 L S S O' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteer, Santal Parganas, op. cit.*, p 60.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p 58.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p 60.
- 52 *The Indian Daily News*, 22 August 1871.
- 53 Judicial Progs, Bengal, January 1872, No 157.
- 54 Judicial Progs, Bengal, June 1872, No 197.
- 55 *Bengal Administration Report, 1871-72*, Political, pp 43-44.
- 56 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1872, No 45.
- 57 CE Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governor*, Vol 1, 1902, pp 11-12.
- 58 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1872, No 45.
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 R N P for week ending 8 March 1873.
- 61 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1872, No 33.
- 62 Dated 3 March 1873: R N P for week ending 8 March 1873.
- 63 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1872, No 45.
- 64 Judicial Progs, Bengal, December 1811, No 151-160.
- 65 *The National Paper*, 16 August 1811.
- 66 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1812, No 48.
- 67 *The Hindoo Patriot*, 13 May 1812.
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 R N P for week ending 20 September 1813.
- 70 *The Hindoo Patriot*, 13 May 1812.
- 71 *Bengal Administration Report, 1872-73*, Administration of the Land, p 15.
- 72 Sir George Campbell, *op. cit.*, p 219.
- 73 *Bengal Administration Report, 1872-73*, Relation with Frontier States and Tribes, p 61.
- 74 L S S O' Malley, *op. cit.*, p 58.
- 75 Judicial Progs, Bengal, May 1812, No 45.
- 76 Sir George Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp 218-219.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p 290.
- 78 Kalyan Kumar Sen Gupta, *Pabna Disturbances and the Politics of Rent, 1873-1885*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi 1974, p 125.
- 79 L S S O' Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

Report

Christians for Socialism

An international conference which met in Quebec during April this year was concerned with the deteriorating world situation and the Christian responsibility for social change. The final communique was found interesting enough for publication, with a view to generating discussion among the readers. We expect some of this debate to crystallize in the form of communications to the SOCIAL SCIENTIST.

AS REPRESENTATIVES of Christian groups we have come together from various countries of Latin America, North America, Europe, Asia and Africa, for an international conference. In the three years since the first Latin American conference of "Christians for Socialism" in Santiago, Chile, in April 1972, Christians committed to the struggle for liberation have grown in number and extended throughout the world. As part of this current, we attempt here to define and develop our action and thought as a point of reference for Christians in the international class struggle today.

During this conference we have undertaken a political analysis of the present crisis of transnational capitalism, as well as of the struggles of peoples for liberation and the construction of socialism. Starting from the perspective of our political action, we have redefined community life, reflection, communication and celebration of our faith in Christ. Likewise, we have reflected on the situation of our churches, nationally and internationally, and also on the rise of a popular and proletarian Christianity, capable of emancipating itself from the domination of bourgeois ideology. We look with hope toward the emergence of a liberating evangelization and toward the establishment of a church of the people. Lastly, we analyze within this new Christian current the prospects of "Christians for Socialism". We present, in this final document, part of the intense work of the commissions and plenary sessions.

Today the world is suffering from an economic crisis, but the oppressed classes always live in crisis. Hunger is a permanent and cruel reality for millions of men, women and children of Asia, Africa and Latin America where now rural unemployment is invading the cities. In the face of this crisis the conspicuous consumption of the wealthy classes is a scandal. In the capitalist countries of the southern hemisphere, the political

The consumer society, development seen solely in terms of GNP growth, law and order, and anti-communism are all components of the ideology promoted by transnational capitalism.

Even the people of the United States, at the heart of the empire, are affected by profound contradictions. The productive base of the country is undermined by the flight of industries to other countries in search of higher profits. An enormous balance of payments deficit caused by the high military costs of imperial dominion produces an economic crisis, manifested in rising inflation and the fall of the dollar as the currency of international reference. In this way the US-based transnational corporations end up contributing to the economic decay of their own country with serious consequences for its workers.

The transnational corporations, most of them based in the United States, generate contradictions which set them against the dependent national states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The corporations also conflict with the competing capitalist states of Europe and Japan and even the United States. These contradictions provoke an increasing and worldwide anti-Americanism. The crisis affecting the United States of America and other capitalist countries, far from being generated by the oil-producing countries, is a structural crisis. Thus, the present inflation, unemployment and slow economic growth will not be overcome in the next few years.

Striving for Liberation

The international class struggle thus encounters new contradictions and assumes new forms. An economic minority, which is beginning to organize as a class on an international level through control of transnationals and alliances with the bourgeoisie of each country, is developing a political project of world proportions and faces a crisis which it cannot totally control. This minority is the number one enemy which the proletariat and peasants must combat. It is evident that they are not yet sufficiently organized on a world scale. They are advancing energetically, however, in many of their national struggles, creating the necessary conditions for regional and international coordination.

This explains the numerous and powerful liberation movements which are found in various countries. Despite the fascist escalation in South America, these movements have won impressive struggles: in the first place, Vietnam and Cambodia, and also in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola and Palestine. In certain countries the military, on becoming conscious of the repressive role they are forced to play, have broken with this role and assumed anti-imperialist positions. Racial and ethnic conflicts, the struggle for human rights and women's liberation are increasingly linked up, often with a progressive thrust, within the complexity of today's class struggles.

Within the contradictions of the capitalist countries analyzed above, another type of social organization is possible and is already being put

into practice. Socialism is the historic movement which brings together those who have made a class option in favour of the interest of workers and of the world's most oppressed peoples. The advanced praxis of the popular movement expresses this class option and actually gives birth to the new societies of the future. Amid the harshest realities of struggle, it is this praxis which gives foundation to our firm hope for a human and just socialist society. This process, as demanding as it is full of promise, is increasingly commanding the participation of men and women who are conscious of human solidarity.

Thanks to the victories won by the working class and the people throughout this century in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa, various countries of the world have established and proceeded to develop socialist regimes. Socialist construction in these societies takes place under difficult conditions, each of them encountering its particular obstacles, internal and external—above all, the opposition of the capitalist world. So profound a social and cultural transformation is impossible without some suffering and partial failures. In countries now dependent on capitalism, this transformation will not be accomplished without the brutal hostility of imperialism, which employs anti-communist propaganda, economic blockades, political subversion, arms build-ups and even war to prevent their development. Under these conditions, the socialist countries face an objective responsibility, to share experiences and offer solidarity as they are required by the worldwide revolutionary movement. Their capacity to overcome their errors, limitations, and, above all, the differences between them, will contribute to the unity of the international workers' movement and to the defeat of the common enemy.

In the struggle for liberation and socialism, the workers' movement and the exploited countries themselves are encountering very concrete and urgent tasks. We want to mention three in particular. First is the international coordination of trade-union struggles, people's organizations and movements of workers and peasants. Also important, to the extent that they reflect the interests of the people, the efforts of various countries are directed to the defence of their natural resources and the control of the international prices of these resources. Lastly, there is the urgent task of solidarity against fascist governments. Work of this type can mobilize progressive and liberal sectors in defence of human rights, thus strengthening the struggle of the workers against international capital.

Practice of Faith

In the context of transnational capitalism today, many of us have discovered that our living, reflection, communication and celebration of faith in Christ find their true place in commitment to a liberating and revolutionary praxis within history. This discovery has led us to see more clearly that the revolutionary task is the place where faith attains its full growth and its radically subversive force. In taking up the task, we embrace all the demands of Jesus's practice, and recognize in him the

foundation of a new humanity.

The recent history of popular struggles, with their successes and setbacks, makes clear to us that the exploited classes and countries are themselves the first and true agents of their own liberation. On top of long-standing oppression, repression of a massive and systematic type is being carried out against every effort of the people to transform the capitalist social order. The only effective and radical challenge to this combination of oppression and repression lies in the struggle which comes out of the strength and consciousness of the poor of this world. Living and reflecting on the faith in this context of oppression and repression force us to seek untested possibilities in our testimony to the power of Jesus's resurrection. If the kingdom is in any sense present when the poor are evangelized, we are convinced that this occurs solely in the measure that the poor are themselves the bearers of the good news of liberation for all people; that is to say, insofar as they make the Gospel their own and announce it in word and deed, rejecting the society which exploits and oppresses them. It is thus that the "wretched of the earth" bear out their unresting hope in liberation.

The praxis of the exploited is a subversive praxis which seeks to build a new earth; to adopt this praxis is to live the experience of an evangelical conversion and to find a new human and Christian identity. Conversion means a break with collective and personal complicities and challenge to oppressive power. Moreover if we say we are Christians, it means being alive to the burning question of the needs of the popular struggle. This political and spiritual rupture is the presence of the resurrection, the passover of freedom and the experience of the new life according to the Spirit.

People's Church

Hitherto the faith has been lived and understood in isolation from the contemporary revolutionary struggle and in a world to which a conflictual and dialectical vision of history is alien. Insofar as identification with the struggles and interests of the popular classes constitutes for the Christian the axis of a new way of being human and accepting the gift of God's word, to that degree the Christian becomes aware that a faith-reflection rooted in historical praxis is really a theology linked to the liberation struggles of the oppressed.

The truth of the Gospel lies in doing it. Being a witness to the truth means making real the promise that men and women shall be brothers and sisters in transforming history from below, from among the poor of this world.

Christians who seek to live this experience of faith find themselves up against the hard reality of a church which contradicts simultaneously the demands of their political commitment and those of their faith. Seeing peoples, countries and continents brutally crushed, they expect a prophetic voice of denunciation from the churches which are the heirs of the rebel

reading it from the point of view of the poor and oppressed classes. Also, they are beginning to assume once again the responsibility of themselves directing their churchly activity. And, finally, they are beginning to re-appropriate liturgical and sacramental symbols and to find new possibilities for contemplation, celebration and eucharist, which can provide a common sign of their two-fold fidelity, to Christ and to the liberating struggle of the poor.

A truly new form of the church can be developed only in a society which has broken down the structures of domination and laid foundations of the objective conditions for liberty and justice. We know that no type of historical society or church can ever be totally free of sin, and therefore the forward pull toward human and Christian fullness of life will never cease.

Nevertheless, the utopian perspective has already attained a mobilizing impetus in today's struggle, promoting new kinds of local Christian participation still groping and provisional but not less vital for all that. It is in this growth of a people's church that the Christian conscience takes on class-consciousness without being reduced to it.

Throughout this forward groping the Christian community slowly begins to envision the features of the future society. To the degree that the people become the subject of history, the people of God will be the true subject of the church.

The church will be an effective sign of God's love and of Christ the Liberator only if it becomes in itself an effective and prophetic sign of a different kind of future, not only beyond but in the very heart of history.

Hopeful Signs

A growing number of Christians in five continents are joining in the struggles for the liberation of the people. These Christians are shaping a broad current, defined by a new quest of faith and a search for churchly forms within a proletarian and socialist political practice. In the different countries, these Christians are forming a variety of grassroots groups and national movements. They are not, nor do they wish to be, "Christian" political parties. On the contrary, viewing the workers' movement as necessarily one, these Christians are joining proletarian parties and organizations. Inserted in and somewhat dispersed throughout the political struggle, they nonetheless unite to carry on in the Christian domain an ideological struggle which is becoming more and more important. This activity brings new motives for coming together in committed Christian communities where a liberating evangelization and the seeds of a people's church are germinating.

In this way, a new kind of Christianity, tied to the interests of the working class, is arising as an alternative to a Christianity allied ideologically and structurally to the dominant system of exploitation. As part of this wider current, the "Christians for Socialism" movement is nourished by it, and in some countries and certain situations it constitutes an

organizational tool as useful for its grassroots membership as in its public and social manifestations, at the national levels.

The development of this current of Christians committed to the struggle for liberation, and the growing strength of "Christians for Socialism" are signs of hope.

This hope is rooted in the historic force of the movement of workers and peasants, and in its capacity for resistance and struggle. This movement is growing in unity and winning over broader and broader sectors of the people, thus achieving victories in various parts of the world. The historic force of the struggle of the poor and oppressed, in whom we acknowledge the presence of Christ, serves also as the starting-point for the liberation of the Gospel, the theology, the churches and society, all of which have been held captive by those in power and their ideologies of domination. As brothers and sisters, we call on all Christians to share actively in our concerns, in our efforts, and in the struggle we are waging.

NOTES

Deshabhimani Study Circles: Literary Movement in Kerala

THE DESHABHIMANI study circles form a network of the most vigorous and widespread literary movement in Kerala today. Upholding the militant traditions of the erstwhile Progressive Writers' Association, it has a far more extensive coverage and a wider variety of activities. Our experience of this movement may have something of interest to comrades and friends elsewhere in India just as we would like to learn from their experience of revolutionary and progressive art and writing.

The study circle movement originated at a writers' meeting in Calicut in 1969, which was convened to formulate the policies for a literary cultural weekly journal to be launched as an associate publication of the *Desabhimani* newspapers. Editors and young writers of the weekly were joined by some of the leading lights of contemporary Malayalam literature like Thayat Sankaran, M R Chandrasekharan and N N Kakkad. It was considered desirable to hold regular meetings of writers and readers of the *Desabhimani Weekly* to criticize its contents and suggest improvements. Such meetings, it was felt, should not be confined to the headquarters of the weekly: new writers should be encouraged in these gatherings to submit their work for scrutiny of the members. After careful criticism and improvement, it would come up for publication in the *Desabhimani Weekly* or other journals willing to encourage new authors.

Another important suggestion made by this conference was to open the forum of the newly-formed discussion groups to writers and critics, irrespective of ideological and political persuasion. There was no motive of conversion in this move towards a dialogue but it was hoped to make a healthy impact, all the same. We want our movement and its young writers to constantly cross swords with other ideologies in order to sharpen their own ideological weapons. Such a confrontation not only helps them guard against the general tendency to facile generalization and paralyzing jargon, it inspires them to deepen understanding and to brighten styles of expression. If we shy away from the challenge of alien ideologies and confine ourselves to mutual admiration societies we run the risk of cutting ourselves adrift from the mainstream of the cultural movement. How then can we ever think of turning it in the direction of class struggle, freedom

and revolution?

Though we were vigilant and sometimes even jealous in guarding the scientific purity of our outlook, and unsparing in our criticism of alien trends, the study circles functioned as a broad forum of debate, discussion and creativity. There are but few among the older generation of writers who would not consider it an honour to be invited to our platforms, even to face a barrage of adverse criticism and argument. Writers like N V Krishna Warriar, M T Vasudevan Nair, S K Pottekkatt, P C Kuttikrishnan Vylloppilly Sreedhara Menon, P K Sivasankara Pillai, K Damodaran. Pavanam, Ayyappa Panicker, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai, G Sankara Pillai, Balamony Amma, Kakkanadan, Joseph Mundassery, M K Sanu, M S Menon and others, who can by no means be put in the same category as the circle's sponsors, are ready and willing to cooperate with us. Some of them are agreeable, a few neutral and others opposed to what we stand for. Theirs are names to conjure with in modern Malayalam literature. But eminence is by no means their monopoly: it is shared equally by the sponsors and leaders of the study circle movement like E M S Namboodiripad, Cherukat, Thayat Sankaran, M K Chandrasekharan, E K Nayanar, V Aravindakshan, P Valsala, Sreerekha, Iyyankode Sreedharan, G Janardhana Kurup, Punalur Balan, A P Kalakkad, P A Syed Mohammed, M N Kurup and others. Though the awards of government, the Academies and other establishment organs are no decisive criteria of excellence, the fact that many of the latter group had honour and recognition bestowed on them from such bodies need not have to go unmentioned.

Encouraging New Writers

The new generation of authors who came to prominence under the inspiration of the study circles can count among their number critics like Vasanthan, Appukuttan, Rajeevan, Kuttikrishnan and Mohanan; poets V P Vasudevan, Abu Baker, Ezhachery, Krishnan Kutty, S Ramesan; short-story writers like G V Balakrishnan, T M Varghese, Lalitha, Devi, M K Gangadharan, Bakkalam Damodaran, Haridas Verkode, Prabhakaran, Nassar, Jayaraj and Bharathi Devi who are fast making their mark on the literary scene of Kerala.

Another significant development pertains to quite a few talented writers who till recently had been roaming the wilderness of Modernism, Ultra-modernism, Extremism, Existentialism and what have you. Though one would not say that they have finally found their feet firmly on the highway of science and revolution, there are unmistakable signs of their being strongly drawn towards our movement. Among these may be mentioned Sachidanandan, Sankara Pillai, Rajeevan, Vinayachandran and B Krishnan Nair. They were moved neither by flattery nor compromise. Our principled stand on their aberrations was combined with a readiness to give them a patient hearing and to appreciate the style and dazzle of their writing which held much that was of value to our members. This approach acted as a powerful inducement to extricate themselves

from the dross.

The organization of the study circle is still in the formative stages. It does not, for instance, have a manifesto. The basic document is an "Appeal to Writers" adopted in Tirur at the northern regional conference of the circle in 1974. Though zonal in scope, this conference was in fact attended by delegates from all over Kerala state. The appeal, presented by E M S Namboodiripad and adopted after many amendments, is neither comprehensive nor definitive enough to entitle it to the status of a manifesto. Yet it lays down the guidelines for day-to-day work and advance. An English version of this document appeared in *Social Scientist* 27 (October 1974).

The study circle does not operate within the framework of a constitution, though there are ad hoc rules adopted by the various bodies with suitable variations. It is quite different in the style of functioning from the old Progressive Writers' Association. We are as yet reluctant to conform the movement to an organizational type with paid membership, unreserved acceptance of a set of aims and policies and so forth.

Flexible Framework

Accustomed as we are to highly disciplined and specifically defined norms of organization, this flexible system is not without raising occasional problems and difficulties. But at the present stage it works rather well without a major hitch. It helps to keep the movement as broad-based as possible and allows a wide range of initiative for leaders and members alike. Ideological discipline and direction are guaranteed by the vigilant and regular functioning of the state coordination committee.

Under the state coordination committee are the committees at the district, taluk and local levels. Local committees are registered on a payment of Rs 10. There are now more than 300 of them at work. The state committee issues regular circulars and directives to the lower bodies. Whenever an important district function takes place, a levy is paid to the state committee. It is usual for the state committee to have a session on the occasions of district seminars and conferences. Apart from the levy, the organisers of these functions defray the expenses of the state committee meetings in the form of travel, board and lodging. The district seminar in its turn gets the benefit of participation of the state leaders. Every month there are one or two district functions of this kind and their expenses vary from Rs 1500 to Rs 5000.

The general pattern of the district conferences is somewhat like this: presentation and discussion of documents such as the "Appeal to Writers" followed by a seminar on subjects like proletarian aesthetics, progressive cinema, the novel, short story, poetry and so on. Some districts hold special functions in connection with birthdays of outstanding writers, past and present. For example the Malappuram district body took up the celebration of the 60th birthday of Cherukat, the doyen of revolutionary writers panfounder-leader of the study circle movement. As a matter of fact there

was a series of conferences to mark the *shashthyabdapoorthi* of this influential writer all over the state—and most of them turned out to be first-rate literary conferences devoted to serious debates. Ernakulam district celebrated the 60th birth anniversary of the late Changampuzha, and the opportunity was taken to evaluate the verses and lyrics of this poetic genius. Ernakulam also observes the death anniversary of the well-known Marxist poet K P G Namboodiri every January. The occasion for felicitating P J Antony who won the Bharatha Award for his role in *Nirmalyam*, the film which won the 1974 gold medal, turned out to be a magnificent debate on the modern cinema. Likewise Adoor Gopalakrishnan, M T Vasudevan Nair and such progressive film celebrities were also honoured on our platforms. The cinema has become a popular theme at the meetings of the study circles. And it is gratifying that precisely those Malayalam films extolled by the circle and the *Deshabhimani* won the top national and state awards—*Swayamvaram*, *Nirmalyam*, *Gayathri* and *Utharayanam*, to mention the best pictures of recent years.

Some district committees conduct important statewide conferences and projects under their auspices. Alleppey district hosted a drama seminar and a training camp. Kozhikode held three statewide training camps—for poets and short-story writers—and a seminar on folksongs. All these attracted attention from quarters remote from the study circle movement. The Kottayam district will soon have the honour of hosting a training camp for critics. Another camp for novelists will soon be arranged by the Palghat committee.

Two-Way Channel

The local and taluk functions are small-scale replicas of the district seminars and conferences. They are often closer to the rural and urban populace, with more readers than writers taking part, 75 to 150 in number sometimes more. We do not normally encourage larger gatherings for fear of restricted audience participation. In our view, seminars and conferences should never be one-way channels for the writers who have their say, but leave without hearing the reactions of the listeners. Public meetings to explain and propagate the aims of the movement are held, and very often, but not in place of the more serious hall meetings, deliberations and debates.

Recently the study circle has taken to publishing. A volume of short stories and a collection of poems by young writers are already on the stands. Progressive publishers like Chintha and Shakthi and the Deshabhimani Bookstall chain are rendering substantial service to the study circle movement.

Under the sponsorship of the circle, a Kerala Folklore Society has been registered to collect and publish folksongs as well as to promote folklore research. We consider this an immensely important step in the direction of a renaissance of people's art and literature.

Besides presenting progressive plays and variety programmes along

with the conferences and seminars, the study circle members are active in the work of the Indian School of Social Sciences, the rural library movement and dozens of drama and dance samithis and film societies.

Workers of the study circle when invited, participate in other literary forums organized at times in opposition to it. We use such occasions to explain our viewpoints and reciprocate the courtesy by invitations to debates on our platforms. Though the Academies under government patronage and old established literary bodies like the Sahithya Parishath are rather reluctant to have many of us in their functions, they cannot altogether write us off or keep us out. For, we have come to stay in Kerala's cultural life and no one can afford to ignore our existence except by minimizing one's own relevance.

We eagerly look forward to closer cooperation, and exchange of notes and ideas with comrades and fellow-writers in other states. In the difficult days that we are passing through, such contacts and exchanges are bound to be of immense mutual benefit.

[The original version of this note was prepared for the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers' Conference at Madurai on 12 and 13 July 1975.]

P GOVINDA PILLAI

Medical Representatives on the March

CORRECTLY DRESSED and well-groomed, the medical representative stands out in a crowd. There are 20,000 of them all over India, promoting the big sell for the multinational and Indian pharmaceutical cartels.

What was a turnover of Rs 10 crores in 1947 stands today at Rs 300 crores. The medical representatives are among those who made a signal contribution to the industry's phenomenal growth by boosting its profitability. While the industry is booming, the salesmen themselves have a very hard time of it, and if only they fail to fulfil the arbitrary marketing targets based on unscientific norms, they find themselves gentlemen at large.

The companies have their own way of confusing the government and the public by citing the exorbitant increase in 'promotional expenses' which they say should be promptly reflected in the mark-up of drug prices. Expense accounts, affluence of executives, rents for palatial residences and offices, all-India conferences, staff training fanfare, five-and seven-star hotel charges for executives, fabulous brochures and sales literature, all these together with the payments to field workers, add up to what is euphemistically called 'promotional expenses'. The outlay on 500 executives and 60 big men at the top would exceed the total emoluments of all the 20,000 field workers put together!

The national and multinational firms find themselves in collusion for this fraud and fiddle. Under the banner of the Organization of Pharmaceutical Industries, they clamour for "a better climate of confidence" and statutory increases in the prices of their products. Reported as 'deliberations', the demands of the cabals are communicated to the authorities and duly acted upon. At the same time, if the field workers assemble, it is termed as 'ganging-up' and the appeals for statutory wage revision (based on the consumer price index) coupled with job security are dismissed as inspired by irresponsible third parties to undermine the 'image' of the companies.

Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman*, exposes the impingement of American commercialism on the aging salesman, Willy Loman. An Indian field worker has the same story to tell: when his hair turns gray,

he is unceremoniously thrown out. While still young, he is on the go all the time, away from the home and family, putting in from 12 to 18 hours a day, travelling, waiting at customers' premises and preparing lengthy reports. He has to trudge long distances with a heavy 'doctor's' kit-bag loaded with literature, samples, and other promotional aids. He has to keep his tie tight round the buttoned-up stiff collar, even under the midday sun.

Technical knowledge of a high calibre is called for in interpreting the various molecular manipulations of the pharmaceutical houses to the medical profession. Unaided, the medical representative has to do all the clerical and manual slog connected with sales.

The service conditions of the field workers are not governed by any rules. Facilities normal for workmen in the firms' factories and offices are not for them to enjoy. There is no legal protection against victimization. Most of them have no right to a bonus (under the act of 1965) on the pretext of the incentive commission which is earned by the few. There is no dearness allowance linked with the consumer price index, no annual increments, leave facilities or medical benefits. The employers have successfully flouted the statutory obligations of provident fund and gratuity for the field staff. On top of it all, the fundamental right of collective bargaining is not theirs after all these years of independence.

Towards Organization

He who raises his voice about grievances is under the threat of losing his job. If a medical representative turns up tieless and suitless, it hurts the firm's public image and he is immediately fired. But appearances are most deceptive. In fact, a tie which cost Rs 5 ten years ago is priced at Rs 50 today while the representative's wages have remained static. If one asks for an improved wage structure and service conditions, one will get the prompt reply from the higher-ups: "You are all non-bargainable category and the law of the land does not recognize you as a workman."

Against this background, the field workers have been forced to renounce their rugged individualism and forge unity for the sake of enhancing bargaining power. The first steps in this collective move were joint appeals submitted to government and management. These appeals predictably made their way direct to the wastepaper baskets in the air-conditioned executive cabins.

Many field workers who challenged the unfair anti-employee practices were hounded out. Victimization, however, produced the very opposite effect to what the employers expected. It created an awareness of realities, a need for unionization and an urge for identity. A concentrated move was taken by the associations of field workers to represent their case more strongly to the governmental authorities. Except for verbal assurances from successive labour ministers, no suitable amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act was forthcoming and the non-applicability of the

Act to the sales promotional employees was with vengeance exploited by the employers.

In November 1971, field workers from all over the country assembled at Delhi and staged a demonstration before parliament demanding 'workman' status. The Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions in its thirty-first report unanimously recommended to introduce, without delay, suitable amendments to bring the sales promotional employees within the compass of the Industrial Disputes Act. Thirty-one leading members of parliament from all political parties then submitted a joint appeal urging the government to amend section (2)S of the Act to facilitate the change.

In November 1973, a week-long *dharna* was staged in front of the Labour Minister's residence. The field workers were assured that action would soon be taken. The *dharna* was addressed by parliament members from all political parties. There was an interim period of suspense and uncertainty which the employers tried to take full advantage of.

Increased Solidarity

Leaders of the field workers were spotted and humiliated under a policy of surprise transfers and brutal retrenchment. J S Mazumdar, then general secretary of the Bihar Representatives' Association was transferred by the Glaxo management for the crime of demanding nationalization of the drug industry! When the infuriated foreign monopoly terminated his services, an agitation was mounted on an all-India scale in his support. After eighteen months of struggle, the giant monopoly retreated in defeat and reinstated Mazumdar.

It was the beginning of an organized movement of the pharmaceutical workers. The Glaxo agitation was wide and sweeping in range bringing together most of the workers in the industry. It also started a chain reaction of organizational mobilization in many parts of the country.

Perplexed by the workers' organization and unity, the Pfizer management introduced a new contract for their field workers, elevating them to fourth grade officers, but with no additional advantages or responsibilities. Some of the field workers refused to sign the new contract. Pressure from the management followed. The workers struck back and went ahead in the direction of organizational integration. The Association of Field Workers was affiliated to the AICAPEF (All India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation) and gave rise to the unity slogan of "*Factorywalla, Officewalla, Pheriwalla, Ekhi, Ekhai*" (Factory hand, office worker and salesman are one and the same).

AICAPEF submitted a charter of demands to the government and the managements, and observed 9 September 1974 as Demands Day. As far as the fieldworkers are concerned, the demand for workman status was emphasized prominently in the charter of demands.

On 21 April 1975, thousands of workers of the drug companies, from office, factory, and field, staged a massive demonstration before the Houses of Parliament. More than 200 were arrested.

On 14 May 1975, the Government of India introduced Bill No. XII of 1975 called the Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Bill in the Rajya Sabha. It is stated in clause 2 (d) that

sales promotion employee means any person by whatever name called (including an apprentice) employed or engaged in any establishment for hire or reward to do any work relating to promotion and sales or business or both and

i) who draws wages (being wages not including any commission) not exceeding seven hundred and fifty rupees per mensem; or

ii) who had drawn wages, (being wages, including commission) or commission only in either case, not exceeding nine thousand rupees in the aggregate in the twelve months immediately preceding the month in which this Act applies to such establishment and continues to draw such wages or commission, in the aggregate, not exceeding the amount aforesaid in a year,

but does not include any such person who is employed or engaged mainly in a managerial or administrative capacity.¹

Workmen or Bosses?

The Bill has made the amount of the wage the determining factor for a field worker to be considered within the scope of this legislation. By fixing the wage ceiling, the Bill discriminates one section of the employees from the others although all do the same job. It leads to an anomalous situation in which one section of field workers drawing Rs 750 and less will be covered while those drawing Rs 751 and above will be left outside the Act's purview. In fact, the wage ceiling is an invitation to the management to get rid of a field worker when he crosses it by quoting the law of the land and saying: "you are not a workman since you are now drawing Rs 751." Thus the Bill which was supposed to afford protection to the field workers in the pharmaceutical industry denies this fundamental justice by the clauses which will keep a large section from the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act section (2) S, which defines a workman.

The Standing Labour Committee at the 29th session held in July 1970 considered a proposal that the definition of the term 'workman' might be amended to include, among others, persons engaged in sales promotion.² The Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions also came to the conclusion "that the ends of social justice to this class of people will be met only by suitably amending the definition of 'workman' in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 in a manner that the medical representatives are also covered by the definition of 'workman' in the said Act."³

The Bill has thus proved to be only a deceptive victory. The medical representatives who have begun to discover their own strength through organization have a long way to march.

N I JOSEPH

¹ Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Bill, No XII of 1975.

² Rajya Sabha Committee on Petitions, 30th Report.

³ *Ibid.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Review Articles

Clearing the Mists of Antiquity

ROMILA THAPAR, *THE PAST AND PREJUDICE*, National Book Trust, New Delhi 1975, pp 70, Rs 5.

AMONG THE various sciences, or branches of knowledge, history is the most partisan. Every class, community, nation and even well-off families have used their own respective 'histories' to bolster themselves and to degrade their rivals.

In our own case, Indian history, as has been correctly pointed out by the author of this book, "resulted in a number of interpretations of the past." The three Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures delivered over the All-India Radio in 1972 and brought together in this little volume are devoted to the negation of many of these "interpretations". Appropriately enough it has been given the title *The Past and Prejudice*, since many of these 'interpretations' are prejudices which have been handed over through generations of historians to the common people.

These however have their origin in the self-interest of particular classes, communities or groups of people. Some of them, for instance, are "related to the needs of imperialism, for economic imperialism had its counterpart in cultural domination." Historical writing coming from this source "aimed at explaining the past in a manner which facilitated imperial rule."¹

Against this arose another school of historical interpretation which is connected with "the ideology of Indian nationalism". As the author goes on to point out,

the national movement itself had picked up facets from the reconstruction of the Indian past. Those historians who were sensitive to the stirrings of nationalism also respond to these facets. Because of the cultural domination implicit in imperialism, nationalism of the anti-colonial variety had to incorporate a programme of cultural nationalism as well... The more persistent of the stereotypes have dominated

not only historical interpretation but have become the foundation of political modern ideologies.²

These two schools of historical interpretation naturally clashed against each other on a number of points. There are however certain matters on which substantial sections of the national school found themselves in agreement with the imperialist school. Romila Thapar addresses herself to some of these common points and effectively combats them on the basis of her scientific analysis of objective facts.

One of these relates to the role played by the Aryan immigration into India which was for long considered to be the starting-point of Indian history. This theory was of course exploded with the discovery of the remains of the Indus Valley Civilization and the enormous material that has been accumulated after those discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. It is now possible for historians to reconstruct a more rational, a more scientific interpretation of Indian history in which the Aryan immigration plays a less significant role than it did earlier.

Aryan Civilization Theory

Basing herself on this rich material that has been accumulated, the author disposes of "the notion of the Aryan race" as "alien to the Indian tradition".³ After discussing the various aspects of this notion, she comes to the conclusion:

The historians therefore cannot but doubt the theory that a large number of Aryans conquered northern India, enslaving the existing population and thereby established their language and culture, both entirely alien to the indigenous tradition. It has to be conceded that, if there was a conquest, it was limited to parts of the extreme North. It is more likely that groups of Aryan-speaking people migrated into northern India, and settled and mixed up with the indigenous population. The culture that resulted evolved from this interaction. The widespread adoption of the Indo-Aryan language in northern India was a major expression of this new culture. Such a phenomenon takes on the dimensions of a social force and has to be seen historically in that light.⁴

The question naturally arises why, and on the basis of what objective factors, such a widespread adoption of the Indo-Aryan language became possible. The author's answer is:

At the beginning of the first millenium B C two innovations of great consequence appear on the Indian scene. One was the extensive use of the horse, an animal comparatively new to the sub-continent, and the other was a familiarity with iron technology... The spoked-wheel chariot drawn by the horse was a technological advance in transportation over the ox-drawn cart. The use of iron improved on a variety of skills which had previously depended on the less durable and weaker metals of copper and bronze. Frequent references to the solar calendar in literature point to an improvement in astronomy and

mathematics at that time. Astronomy and meteorology helped to make sowing, harvesting and irrigation more efficient. Improved geometry not only led to the building of more elaborate sacrificial enclosures, but also a more competent division of the fields, not to mention its use in the constructions of buildings. The new technology appears to have coincided with the Aryan speakers. The association of Sanskrit with the introduction of advanced technology may have led to its wide acceptance. It is significant that in those areas of the sub-continent, where an iron technology was already in existence—through the megalithic culture of the peninsula—the situation was different. Here, Dravidians remained the predominant language group.⁵

The author has thus successfully solved the question: why north India by and large came under one system of socio-cultural organization, why the majority of tribes living in that part of the country should have been brought under the influence of Sanskrit culture and why another part of the country, south India, should by and large have maintained its own distinct cultural patterns, even though influenced to a large extent by the Sanskrit culture from the north. Neither is the former due to the *ethnic* superiority of the *Aryan race*, nor should the latter be attributed to the *ethnic* character of the *Dravidian race*. The phenomenon is to be traced, in both cases, to the character of the technological changes being brought about in the two areas, which found reflection in the two groups of languages.

Marx on India

Tracing the theory of Aryan civilization to the European scholars and administrators, the author goes into other theories like “Indian society having always been an unchanging society”, “Oriental despotism”, or “India having had in historical times no private property in land”. She quotes the well-known articles of Karl Marx on British rule in India, to bring home the point that Marx too was influenced by those facts of Indian history which had been noted by imperialist scholars and administrators, in order to project their own interpretation of history. This is understandable, since

Marx's sources, the writings of Elphinstone, Campbell, Richard Jones and contemporary administrative records, all subscribed to this view. The facts being so limited, few thought of questioning the assumptions. In a later period Marx himself questioned the notion of a continuing and total absence of private property in land. Doubts about the validity of his earlier theory (concerning the absence of private property in land) had increased in the light of investigations made by Marxist historians themselves into the Indian past. On the other hand, the model put forward by Marx is more often used by scholars who by no stretch can be regarded as Marxists.⁶

It is necessary in this context to point out that Marx's writings on

India had a limited objective and scope. He began his well-known articles in 1853 when the British parliament was debating the question of revising the charter given to the East India Company. British politicians themselves being divided on the issue, the Bill under discussion in parliament became a matter of public controversy. Marx was naturally interested in the questions raised on India, as he was interested in every other question connected with the development of British capitalism. He was therefore trying to relate the development of British colonialism in India against the background of capitalist development in the home country.

These debates in the British parliament and Marx's articles on them coincided in time with the gathering storm of people's discontent which was to break out in the form of a two-year war of independence in May 1857. In all these writings (which have now been brought out in Moscow in a collection under the title *First War of Indian Independence*, Marx analyzed the forces that were released by the activities and final victory of the British East India Company.

The founder of the theory of Historical Materialism that he was, Marx could not confine himself to the analysis of the questions raised in the British parliament in the form in which they were raised. He had to go behind them and unravel the socio-economic forces which, by a combination of circumstances, led to the break-up of a stagnant precapitalist Indian society—caste-ridden, very much under the influence of religious obscurantism and with large elements of tribal society still continuing—that too by a foreign power, rather than the indigenous forces of social revolution. He asked himself the question whether the break-up of this stagnant society was from a historical point of view progressive.

Properties of the Transformation

The revolutionary theoretician and the organizer of revolutionary political action in Marx discerned in this destruction of the old its two aspects: *firstly*, that the destruction of the stagnant Indian society was from a historical point of view a progressive development, the British overlords being the "unconscious tools of history" in bringing about a veritable revolution in Indian society; *secondly*, this revolution being carried out by a foreign power which, furthermore, is interested in making only such changes in Indian society as serve their (the Britishers') narrow self interest, the destruction of the stagnant society would not be accompanied by the construction of a new and vigorous society.

In bringing about this dual character of the "revolution" in Indian society, Marx of course had his limitations arising out of the fact that he was relying on such sources as are interested in particular "stereotypes" created by imperialist scholars and administrators. One need not therefore look upon the remarks made by Marx on "oriental despotism", "unchanging character of Indian society", "absence of private property in land and so on as the last word in historical materialism in relation to India. The science of history as it pertains to India should go forward

from what Marx had written over twelve decades ago on the basis of the material then available to him. This is a task in which dedicated Marxists and honest historians who do not subscribe to the theory of Marxism can and should cooperate.

The analysis made by Romila Thapar of what she calls the "prejudices" in relation to the "past" of India gives us hope that such collaboration will be possible. For, the conclusions arrived at by her confirm, rather than negate, the basic postulates of Marx's writings on India—*firstly* that Indian society as it existed at the time of Britain's victorious advance was so stagnant, requiring such fundamental transformations, that no revolutionary would shed a tear over its destruction; *secondly* that no positive consequences would arise out of this destruction so long as foreign domination continued over India. These, after all, constitute the revolutionary essence of Marx's analysis of India in the middle of the nineteenth century.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD

¹ *The Past and Prejudice*, p 4.

² *Ibid.*, pp 4-5.

³ *Ibid.*, p 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 26-27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 27-28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 48.

Bias in Colonial History

ELISABETH WHITCOMBE, *AGRARIAN CONDITIONS IN NORTHERN INDIA, VOLUME I: THE UNITED PROVINCES UNDER THE BRITISH RULE, 1860-1900*. New Delhi and California 1972, pp xxviii + 330.

THIS BOOK maintains that modern agricultural conditions result from a combination, and polarization, of the forces of transformation and preservation at work during the latter half of the nineteenth century. It makes the claim too, that the present institutional framework derives its immediate origins from that period.

Understanding of the present involves clarification of the past and this is, says the author, why the study was undertaken. The analysis of the ecological history and of the institutional developments was based mainly on the technical records of the government. The picture that emerges is one of deteriorating agriculture brought about by the British attempt to "modernize" farming methods, the administrative system and the judicial machinery. Modernization resulted in changes both favourable and deleterious to the ecology. On the one hand the comprehensive canal system was responsible for a sharp rise in the production of cash crops and hence revenue earnings. It also created problems of drainage and waterlogging on fertile land, a sharp fall in foodgrain output with consequent modification of the trade pattern. Colonial intervention came in the form of new laws, regulating relations between the different agrarian strata, which intensified exploitation by the landlords; they were made to pay up more taxes, and in the new situation in which their employment opportunities in the army and government service were cut after the 1957 Revolt, the incidence fell on the peasants.

Though Elisabeth Whitcombe's is a distinctive contribution to the subject, she does not seem to have made the fullest use of official statistics. She goes to great lengths to drive home the point that the huge scheme of

canal irrigation was implemented for the benefit of agriculture. But one cannot but have serious doubts about the motives behind, no less than the relevance of, the whole project. For the administration does not seem to have shown any concern about the upsets in the ecological balance. Various reports indicate that higher output was the principal if not the sole motivation. The author however seems to have fallen for the verbiage of the official declarations. At a lower source level one would possibly have found the corroboration, or what is more likely, the contradiction of the official claims. One is led to suspect that ideological predisposition probably ruled out a negative criticism in this book of the contentions of the government. For example, the reader is supposed to take it as truth and nothing but the truth that "English law is administered to 600,000 people without distinction of creed, caste or colour in Calcutta..." Then there are the innumerable references to the relief works. Apart from contradictory statements the author wants us to believe, without questioning, the official reports that relief was entrusted to the *patwaris* and *kanungos* in order to cut costs. Contemporary periodicals would have furnished convincing proof that the real reason was the callousness of the colonial power which throughout its rule did not seem to have given anything more than scanty attention to general welfare in its mad drive for profit and tribute. By stating as a matter of fact that the government did look after the needy and the famine-stricken, but wanted only to effect economies in the relief operations, Whitcombe is sidetracking the issue with the implicit exoneration of British imperialism.

Lacking in Economic Perspective

As it is, the author, starting from the premise that "every generation has its own interpreters", tries to comment on the public works and the prevailing conditions through the words of contemporary observers who, we are told, made a "contribution to scientific knowledge". While giving us information on the currents and cross-currents of British policy, this methodology is fraught with deplorable drawbacks. For instance, although North-Western Province and Oudh are not isolated cases, never, not even in the footnotes are these territories referred to in this survey of colonialism in north India. The topic of course is 'agriculture', but how can agriculture be dealt with in a vacuum? In the so-called blooming 'Garden of India', agricultural surplus had declined to such low levels as to jolt the world supply structure. At the end of the century the 'garden' was so utterly depleted that India ceased to be an exporter of food. Only from a broader perspective could it be explained why this development did not upset the colonial machinery though there was alarm in certain quarters when, for instance, the harvest in the Meerut division changed from "abundant" to "poor" and then to "very poor" in a matter of two decades.

The absence of economic perspective, a characteristic not confined to the nineteenth-century historians, leads to such assertions as:

"Whatever attempts might be made to avoid direct contact with agriculture some such entanglement was inevitable in an environment where the land was the prime source of wealth: on this ... the government (depended) for its revenue and the investors for their dividends."² The author seems to have been taken in by the semantic falsifications spread by the colonialists to hide their main aim of appropriation of all the surplus available in Indian agriculture.

Technical evidence however discloses what the colonizers concealed. Irrigation helped in stepping up production of only commercial crops such as indigo, sugar, wheat and cotton, while the staple food supply took a downward turn. The author also elaborates how the whole system of rural credit, advances, and *takavi* loans had the self-same effect. One searches in vain why the supply of the food for the masses had dwindled. A couple of times the word 'export' crops up, but it is not clear whether the grain was being exported to Europe or to other scarcity-ridden provinces.

Built-in Limitations

The use of a wider range of sources and a broader framework would have put the valuable material collected by the author in the proper historical perspective. It would have given us some interpretation and not merely a compilation of evidence. If Whitcombe was acquainted with the works not only of the classical school of economists but of the (Marxist and other) economists and historians of the century she would have obtained a deeper insight into the times and events she is writing about. The development of waterways and railways provides a good example of this deficiency.

Why was it that in this region where for the essential crops an efficient irrigation system had been in existence for centuries, ten times more capital was invested on canals than on railways while the rest of India gives the very opposite picture? Why were the *pucca* and *kaccha* wells not improved, the inundation canals neglected and only flush and no lift irrigation introduced? Is it not possible that the concentration on the canals was meant to develop a network of waterways, although some studies have suggested that there was a decline in the water transport of certain commodities?

The author's hidden hypothesis is that the colonial power did its utmost to develop agricultural resources but the Indian ryot was unresponsive. She wants us to overlook the fact that it was the colonial and later imperialist penetration which caused the utter neglect of the traditional canal irrigation system and the deterioration of the agricultural conditions: land was going out of cultivation while trade developed. The author has diplomatically bypassed the question whether trade and transport were considered more important by the British authorities than irrigation and the development of farm productivity. Exports caused a rise in prices all along the canal banks: "Bulk stores at railway stations,

road junctions and ghats on navigable rivers were now becoming the centres of regional accumulation."³ Strangely enough, Whitcombe sees no sign of the plunder in the first phase of colonialism, followed by trade for which the improvement of the transport infrastructure, including waterways in certain parts of India, was urgently needed.

When dealing with railway development, the author of this book joins the company of those British administrators who in their reports complained about the immeasurable amount of wastage: "No industry grew up to provide the materials for their (railways) construction; instead iron and timber were imported into a country rich in those material resources"⁴. There is also denunciation of the disproportionately grandiose machinery imported from Europe which seemed to be of no use to agriculture, and perhaps a convenient omission of the export of Indian opium to China. The reader is supposed to assume that these economic activities had no rhyme or reason while in fact these were the logical necessities of the colonial system. The sources used by the author could not of course have revealed all this, for "economic development existed only in the theories constructed by political economists chiefly of the classical school."⁵

Confusion Worse Confounded

Whitcombe brings together a respectable amount of quotations but one is left wondering whether she writes the language of the nineteenth century or her own. This ambiguity produces peculiar results as for example in this sentence: "Their revenue payments supported the incorruptible (*sic*) upper strata of the European administrators while additional charges were levied for the meagre (*sic*) salaries of native subordinates".⁶ It is also not clear whether she uses the term 'cultivator' for landless peasants, dwarf peasants, middle peasants, rich peasants or landlords or for all of them put together.

This straight borrowing from contemporary observers becomes even more obnoxious when we come across explanatory quotes without quotation marks. Apparently, the view of the book is that due to insurmountable obstacles, cotton could not be grown profitably in India⁷; a fundamental caveat of British rule was to avoid moves leading to the disruption of the traditional order of the local society⁸; government had no means of protecting the cultivator⁹; and the reluctance to dispense with any of its recognized agencies (as the corrupt patwari) was reinforced by the overriding necessity to cut costs.¹⁰ We would rather prefer to believe that this was not the view of the author as well, for it is easy to perceive in the last case that with the reliance of the patwari on local resources the whole administrative and revenue machinery became a millstone hanged about the peasant's neck.

In some cases the unselective use of source material produces contradictory conclusions. An example of this is on pages 165 to 169 and 197 to 198 which give the following impression: The majority of the peasants

were *unwilling* to accumulate reserves while the regular drain made it *impossible* to store up reserves; savings, if any, were spent in marriages and other petty *extravagances*; *abundance* in fact worked against them and brought loss and ruin. Previously, it was quoted from the Ryots Commission of 1875: "probably the total sum spent in this way by any ryot is not larger than any man in his position is justified in spending, in social and domestic pleasures", whatever that may mean.¹¹

A book on agrarian conditions, one would have imagined, must highlight the vital point about the kind of agrarian relations prevailing in the countryside. Whitcombe has singularly failed to enlighten us on this score.

One would have expected too, an examination of the institutional factors behind the continued impoverishment of the peasants. The essence of the agrarian condition was the nature of the economic system which served the capitalist development not within the colony, but far beyond the borders. However, the author nowhere elaborates on this point, though in some passages she gives us a hint of what the mode of production meant for agriculture: not to be developed but to be exploited. Thus, she mentions that takavi grants for land improvement, which existed before in India and still in England "with admirable results", were restricted so much that they represented only about 1/1000 of the land revenue.

Disorganization of Production

From the information available in this study it is fairly obvious the British were trying to increase output and productivity which by no means led to the development of a capitalist mode of production in the country. Generalized commodity production was imposed from outside and though it led to a far-reaching polarization, disorganization and pauperization, it was not accompanied by the development of capitalism in agriculture. The transitional stage of agricultural economy was cut short in its logical development from feudalism to capitalism. Though the masses of sharecroppers were on the verge of passing over into the class of hired labour, this ultimate evolution did not consummate, mainly because cultivation of land through sharecroppers in bondage proved generally more profitable than through hired labour. Agricultural commodities, the surplus from feudal exploitation, found their way into the world capitalist mode of exchange without their capitalist mode of circulation being strong enough to hit back and fundamentally alter the feudal mode of production. The British were possibly trying to introduce capitalist property relations on a feudal sub-structure. (The sections on litigation and on the conversion of land into estate ownership indicate this.) The judicial system imposed by the colonial power, however, was not grafted on to the emerging internal contradictions and hence the most optimum result was only a modification of the feudal mode of production. It may be recalled that a continuous debate was going on among British administrators on how to solve this dilemma. Whitcombe has given a good account of the debate though

ultimately the reader who wants to look for final answers in left is the lurch. All that the debate amounts to is, according to her interpretation, that "the aspirations of economic theory were not backed by suitable means of enforcement" so that "government was compelled to correct its forward-looking principles to alter the conservative fashion of its predecessors."

The British policy resulting from this experience was "not to supplant the existing social order but to shepherd it firmly towards modernity". The general impression the book leaves is that if shepherding was done at all it took place under deteriorating circumstances for the peasantry: or, as is stated in the preface, a depressed peasantry which laboured in a distorted environment. Feudalist exploitation got reinforced under conditions of capitalist relations of exchange. This evolution is apparent from the excellent chapter on the problem of rural indebtedness. While the government extracted higher surplus from the peasantry, the supply of loans from the treasury to the rural population contracted. Private money-lenders were therefore free to exploit the increased credit requirements. Rural banking became indisputably the most profitable avenue of investment of local capital in the later nineteenth century. The principle on which a creditor operated was not the recovery of the amount lent but ensuring a regular source of income from high interest rates. It was in his interest to keep his debtor indefinitely in a state of dependence by means of heavy charges. The only element that could temper the exorbitant rent was, as the Bareilly settlement report pointed out, the fear of driving the debtors to emigrate to the *terai*, "a safe haven of refuge". This structure explains the non-emergence of capitalism. Whitcombe observes: "Although canal irrigation had in many cases caused substantial ecological changes, it brought no revolution in the techniques traditionally used by the local farmers, and even more important, it left untouched the local networks of charges and loans which so largely controlled the production and distribution of their crops."

Peasant Revolt

Since this is a study of the agricultural conditions, as also of the conditions in which the peasants were exploited, it should have devoted more attention to the relations between the revenue-collectors and the revenue-payers. Whitcombe observes that absentee landlords, unless they were accompanied by an armed retinue, could not move about in the districts. They had therefore to delegate their authority to subordinate agents. Nevertheless, "collections... depended on force, and the maintenance of troops thus became an essential prerequisite."¹² Observers commonly mistook "the social necessity of the retainer forces... for a perverse and wilful oriental extravagance"¹³ while in fact these forces ranged from "agents who supervised cultivation and the collection of dues to bodyguards armed with cudgels." Whitcombe notices, without seeing the importance of it, that the military establishment accounted for 25 per cent of public expenditure compared to only 12 per cent for public works and

4 per cent for agriculture.

It is casually observed that the ryots could "rob a store or could riot; the latter was a frequent occurrence in the district of Doah"¹⁴. It is the basic hypothesis of the book that the British wanted to bring about modernizing changes but Indians did not welcome the benevolent light of British statesmanship: the resistance and traditionalism of the natives stood in the way of the progressive plans initiated by the Queen's government. With this assumption it would have been difficult for the author to explain the frequent peasant revolts, which form the subject of study by, among others, S B Chaudhuri and Stephen Fuchs.

One might say this has been too querulous a criticism of a widely-acclaimed study which provides us with new material on public works and agricultural resources, revenue settlements, policy and problems of litigation, indebtedness and so forth. The wealth of data makes the study a standard work on these topics. The danger of Whitcombe's contribution, however, lurks in the wealth of empirical data obscuring the apologetic, neocolonial approach which ignores the economic motives of the colonialists who chose the most backward class of landlords as their prop and pillar. By isolating agriculture from the broader economic context, this book conspicuously leaves out the analysis of the underlying socio-economic forces.

GEORGES KRISTOFFEL LIETEN

¹ *The United Provinces under the British Rule, 1850-1900*, p 208.

² *Ibid.*, pp 63-64.

³ *Ibid.*, p 191.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 92.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 97.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 273.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p 179.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 175.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 147.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 48.

¹² *Ibid.*, p 56.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p 141.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p 197.

TITANIUM DIOXIDE (Anatase)

- 1 WE ARE NOW IN A POSITION TO MEET THE FULL REQUIREMENTS OF ALL OUR CUSTOMERS.
- 2 SUPPLIES IN EXCESS OF ONE TONNE WILL BE MADE BY US DIRECT ON REQUEST.
- 3 SMALLER QUANTITIES WILL BE SUPPLIED ON REQUEST BY OUR STOCKISTS AT BOMBAY, AHMEDABAD, DELHI, CALCUTTA, MADRAS, ANDHRA PRADESH & BANGALORE.

TRAVANCORE TITANIUM PRODUCTS LTD TRIVANDRUM 21

KERALA

ADVERTISERS PLEASE NOTE

Special numbers of the SOCIAL SCIENTIST have an immensely wide circle of readers. The forthcoming double issue on WOMEN for November-December 1975 offers you a chance to reach an unusual audience both in number and variety. Here is information which enables you to make a businesslike decision:

RATES

Full page: Rs 500
Half page: Rs 300
Inside cover: Rs 1000
Back cover: Rs 1500

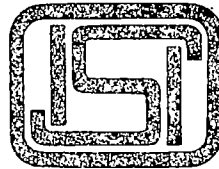
MECHANICAL DATA

Overall size: $24\frac{1}{2}$ cm \times 16cm
Print area: $19\frac{1}{2}$ cm \times $11\frac{1}{4}$ cm

Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum 1.

Toshiba
ANAND

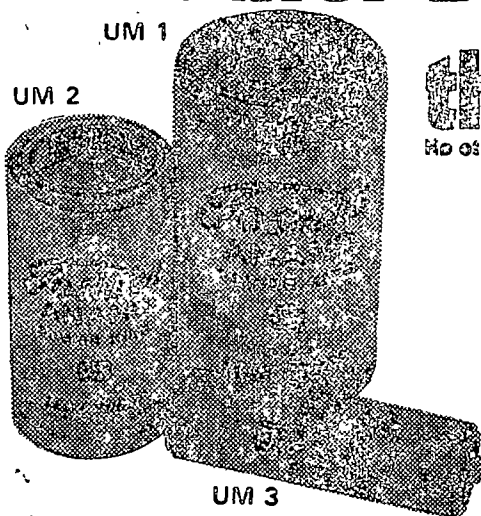
IS: 203



No other Battery has

UM 1

UM 2



UM 3

IS: 203

the  **mark**

No other Battery has the 'up seal' either.

NOW!

Toshiba
ANAND

THE ONLY BATTERY
WHICH HAS THE
I.S.I. MARK OF QUALITY.

THE ONLY BATTERY
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TEST
BEFORE BUYING.

TOSHIBA ANAND BATTERIES LTD.
REGD. OFFICE: XXXI/1089 M, G. ROAD,
COCHIN-682 011.
FACTORY: KALAMASSERY, KERALA.

ALL-INDIA CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

In the last week of December 1975, the Indian School of Social Sciences is planning to hold a three-day conference and seminar in Trivandrum on the subject of WOMEN. Among the participants-to-be are some of the leading personalities in the women's movement in India and abroad.

Simultaneously, SOCIAL SCIENTIST brings out a double issue for November-December which will focus attention on women's role in the social, economic and political life of the nation. The articles appearing in this number will form the starting point of the seminar.

Combining the two issues 40 and 41, the single copy price will be only Rs 5. Agents are urged to book their additional requirements in advance with the Manager, SOCIAL SCIENTIST. Subscribers who have paid up to December and after will receive SS 40-41 without any hitch.

Those who want to take part in the all-India conference should immediately write, for further details, to Dr Jacob Eapen, Indian School of Social Sciences, Trivandrum-1.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 8 MARCH 1975

Sociology and sociological radicalism : *S C Varma*; Colonialization of the Indian economy, 1757-1900 : *Irfan Habib*; Class character of the Indian Constitution : *Hari Chand*; Theories of state, Aristotle to Marx : *Arvind N. Das*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 9 APRIL 1975

Samuelson's Marx-kritik: *J E King*; Problems of Indian history: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Origin and development of Islam: *Asghar Ali Engineer*; Student leadership in Lucknow: *Rashid Ali Syed*; Notes on: Mathematical methods in international relations analysis; Property rights under the Constitution.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10 MAY 1975

Politics of psychoanalysis: *S C Varma*; Political economy of food, Part I: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Herostone worship in ancient south India: *N Vanamamalai*; Student movement at JNU: *Prakash Karat*; Note on transnational monopolies.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 11 JUNE 1975

Studies in the development of Indian capitalism: *N Ram*; Political economy of food, Part II: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Jaya Prakash Narayan's politics: *S C Varma*; Notes on: Marxism and Indian sociology; The national sector and commanding heights; Communication on Marxism and quantum mechanics.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 12 JULY 1975

China and the undivided Communist Party of India: *Georges Kristoffel Lieten*; Sociology of conflict theory: *Manorama Savur*; Revolutionary violence in a people's war: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Note on foreign monopolies and the Indian drug industry; Communication on Marx, Samuelson and King.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1 AUGUST 1975

Theoretical aspects of the national question: *Prakash Karat*; Emergence of nationalism: *Irfan Habib*; National problems in India and pre-revolutionary Russia: *Ajit Roy*; Class character of the nationalist movement: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Regional development and the national question in north-east India: *S K Chaube, S Munsu and A Guha*; Rise and growth of the Bengali nationality: *Partha Chatterjee*.

Social Scientist

TOBER

975

39

Historical Perspectives on Ancient India
Peasants and Political Power in Mexico
India's First Private Irrigation Company
Indigo Planters and Ram Mohan Roy
Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union

Social Scientist

Editor

Jacob Eapen

Associate Editors

Mohan Thampi

P N Varughese

Editorial & Circulation

SOCIAL SCIENTIST

Indian School of Social Sciences

Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30

Half-yearly : Rs 15

FOREIGN

(In US dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11

Air Mail : Annual \$ 20 (USA & Canada)

\$ 17 (Other countries)

(In pounds sterling)

£ 4.50

£ 6.00

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 4 OCTOBER
NUMBER 3 1975

CONTENTS

- M G S Narayanan** 3 Historical Perspectives on
Ancient India
Roger Bartra 12 Peasants and Political Power in
Mexico
Sourin Bhattacharya 35 India's First Irrigation Com-
pany

NOTE

- Subbhas Bhattacharya** 56 Indigo Planters, Ram Mohan
Roy and the Charter Act of
1833

BOOK REVIEWS

- R P** 66 Science and Philosophy in the
Soviet Union
Mohan Thampi 76 The Politics of Literature

Articles, note and book reviews express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

CONTRIBUTORS

ROGER BARTRA, who is in the Institute of Social Research at the Autonomous University of Mexico, is editor of HISTORIA Y SOCIEDAD.

SOURIN BHATTACHARYA is in the department of economics, Jadavpur University, Calcutta.

SUBHAS BHATTACHARYA teaches history at Katwa College, University of Burdwan.

Dr M G S NARAYANAN is professor of history at Calicut University.

Dr MOHAN THAMPI is reader in English, Banaras Hindu University.

FROM THE EDITOR

THE AUTHORS of "Regional Development and the National Question in North-east India" (*Social Scientist* 37) wish to acknowledge that it was originally read at a seminar on "Development in North-east India" sponsored by the North East India Council for Social Science Research at Shillong in March 1974. The inadvertent omission to mention this when the article appeared in the August 1975 number is regretted.

M G S NARAYANAN

Historical Perspectives on Ancient India

THERE IS a growing awareness among historians everywhere in the post-Ranke period of historiography that any view of history depends as much on the eye of the beholder as the source-materials themselves, that is, every group and every new generation tends to revise old judgements and attitudes. The eye means the mind and the mind represents the whole spectrum of social background, philosophy, interest and motivation.

Till the middle of the present century Indian history was conceived and presented in terms of a Eurocentric outlook by British and European historians. The early history of India, which was completely lost, was rediscovered by these foreigners and pieced together by their patient labour from obscure literary texts, inscriptions in forgotten scripts, and stray foreign notices. In this way it was all the more susceptible to the impact of Western ideas and prejudices, especially because it was all meant for a European public, although educated Indians began to creep in as "an eavesdropping audience". It was apparently remote and free from the pressures of contemporary politics but in practice very much affected by such bias, this being all the more harmful as it was largely unconscious and consequently undetected.

In the middle decades of the present century, and increasingly in the period after independence, a good number of Indian scholars have

been engaged in tackling the problems of historical reconstruction related to ancient India. Sometimes they followed the leadership of European scholars or accepted partnership in their ventures, but very often they criticized and rejected early European foundations. The first generation of nationalist historians in India has been followed by another generation of academic researchers who are neither imperialist nor nationalist in their approach to history but want to be more objective than both. They are conscious of the limitations of previous writers imposed by sources as well as by perspective. Many of them do not reject a nationalist approach but work for its modification, enrichment and further development in positive content. Nevertheless, there are others who disown the national point of view altogether in favour of a humanistic or proletarian commitment. This article attempts to make a survey of recent trends, concentrating on the conceptual problems to the exclusion of technical and organizational problems of research, except when they are directly relevant to the process of conceptualization.

Eurocentrism

This review may be prefaced by a brief statement about the nature of the Eurocentric approach, since it served as the background and as the point of departure for Indian historians of India. Imperialist or liberal, capitalist or communist, all historians looked at India from the European angle. Even when they shook themselves free from European interests and pressures, their minds were still immersed in European value systems which conditioned their attitude. The emphasis differed from writer to writer. Perhaps labels like imperialist, liberal, utilitarian or evangelist, adopted in certain studies, are not very useful in recognizing the real character of the bias. This type of classification follows largely the expressed ideas of the writers rather than the hidden or half-hidden factors which affected their entire perspective. Broadly speaking, it is perhaps relevant to identify certain major influences at work on the European historians of India. These were:

- 1 Medieval Christian faith as represented by the Catholic and Protestant churches obsessed with the idea of proselytization.
- 2 Classical education dominated by the renaissance view of Greek civilization and culture.
- 3 Interests and policies of the British Raj articulated and jealously guarded by the intelligent bureaucratic machine.
- 4 Social attitudes generated by the Industrial Revolution and the capitalist regime.
- 5 Modern scientific spirit surcharged with the desire to observe and understand things as they are.

To be fair it must be admitted that the great majority of European historians were not consciously importing extraneous considerations into the study of Indian history. Where they injected propaganda into it, as Vincent Smith or W W Hunter or E J Rapson did, they made no effort to

conceal it from the public eye. The scrupulous care with which they collected the data will elicit praise even from the most severe critic of their approach to the history of India.

Indian scholars who entered the field in the early decades of the present century were mostly trained and inspired by their European preceptors, whose work they carried forward in many ways. They followed the same methods and techniques but most of them were consciously or unconsciously affected by the spirit of nationalism. History had become the food of nationalism at that stage. In opposition to the persistent British efforts to deny nationhood to India in the present as well as the past, Indian historians had often been trying to use history in the service of nationalism by glorifying kings, events, institutions, periods, movements and regions. They picked up and whitewashed those areas which had been tarnished by prejudice. This provided a means of legitimate correction and improvement as it brought about re-assessment of events and personalities, filled up certain gaps in our knowledge, (especially about regional dynasties and republican tribes) and clarified the nature of artistic, religious and social development. Nationalistic bias was also responsible for exaggeration and distortion when elements of British parliamentary democracy, socialism, and welfare state were discovered in ancient records. On looking back there is nothing surprising in this because imperialism and nationalism are first cousins who speak the same language of prejudice. There is more of basic continuity in spite of superficial conflict between the imperialist and nationalist historians of the pre-independence era inasmuch as the latter did not introduce any fundamental shift in perspective.

Nationalist Bias

Nationalist historians modified the framework a little but it was not abandoned altogether. Extreme Hindu chauvinist attitude was exhibited by K P Jayaswal in *Hindu Polity*, and reflected even in publications like *The Cultural Heritage of India*. A number of scholars from Bengal, Madras and Bombay carried on this tradition. As long as they cared more for propaganda than academic discipline, these were not able to provide fresh insight into the historical process. However, there was another group of writers like A S Altekar, R K Mukherji and R C Majumdar who produced works richer in facts and more precise in details though they often fell short of international standards at the level of interpretation and explanation.

In this period several nationalist historians idealized Indian rulers and characterized invaders as barbarians. They multiplied the number of heroes and dug up the history of more and more empires—those of the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, and Cholas in the south, the Palas and Senas in the east, and the Pratiharas and Chandelas in the north. More and more details about more and more kingdoms were added on to the main body of the narrative. However, it must be admitted that neither the sober

textbook epigrams of Jadunath Sarkar's *India through the Ages* (he produced the numbered sequences of merits and defects for Buddhism, Islam, British rule and so forth) nor the pseudo-intellectual jugglery of K. M. Panikkar's *Survey of Indian History* (he envisaged a kind of capitalism even as early as the period of the Nanda empire), and not even the whole inspired fiction of Nehru's *Discovery of India* (he used the term synthesis in a beautifully vague sense to cover up all defects and failures) can satisfy the canons of modern historical method although they catered to certain psychological needs of the national struggle.

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's multi-volume series, *History and Culture of the Indian People*, incorporating the results of recent research, is richer in details regarding dynastic and regional history, economic and social history and history of art and literature when compared to the earlier *Cambridge History of India*. The best historians available in India were commissioned to write the chapters. The common European prejudices resulting in the concepts of India's innate political weakness, otherworldly spiritualism, and the Hindu-Muslim-British periodization have been abandoned here, only to be substituted by an Indian nationalist bias in the opposite direction. On the whole the Bhavan volumes with their extravagant idealism and lack of a new conceptual framework failed to satisfy the demand for a better national history, at least for the academics, in spite of the optimism of the traditionalist foreword writer, K. M. Munshi, whose commonplace generalizations mar the frontage of every volume. Another multivolume project, *Comprehensive History of India*, sponsored by the Indian History Congress, has so far produced only two volumes—*The Nandas and Mauryas* and *Delhi Sultanate*—in several years. They are both excellent studies in themselves and the former is much more objective and scientific in its treatment than its Bhavan counterpart. Still the overall conceptual framework follows the same old pattern of British and Indian projects that of the rise and fall of successive empires punctuated by foreign invasion.

The Glory That Was

There were serious problems thrown up by the internal contradictions of the nationalist position. For example, the glorification of Hinduism irritated the protagonists of Islam, and the same thing happened with regard to the North-South or Brahmin-Non-Brahmin or Aryan-Dravidian or upperclass-lowerclass interests. If you emphasized the brief periods of imperial glory, the regional pride of some part of India or other will be offended. On the other hand if you put in all the regional dynasties and cultures, and the periods of triumphant progress as well as tragic decay, the picture of national evolution is blurred. There is actually too much of variety and complexity for the history of a single nation. Moreover, the unexpected partition of India and the need to produce nationalist histories of the two separate nation states revealed the inadequacy of the nationalist interpretation. As international or extra-national concept of the evolution of history and society, a more objective study of

the past delinked from immediate goals dictated by the present environment, appears as the only way out of the tangle.

Meanwhile, separate studies, good, bad and indifferent, have enriched regional history in the north and south, economic and social history, artistic and intellectual history in the form of M Litt and Ph D dissertations and monographs from universities and research institutes. What is needed is a new integrated approach different from the empire-invasion-empire pattern which fitted into the larger ancient-medieval-modern framework borrowed from Europe.

Breaking New Ground

The dawn of independence made anti-imperialism less relevant and therefore liberated Indian historians from an obsession. The calmer atmosphere of the fifties and early sixties, full of hope and ideas of progress, encouraged fresh thinking. Some universities in the United States and the Soviet Union were now taking a new look at Indian's past. British universities, especially the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, took initiative in trying to assess early work in the field in collaboration with Indian scholars. The starting point of a professional academic reassessment which produced long term results was the seminar which brought out the voluminous text of *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. It sparked off a series of discussions and caused rethinking in academic circles in India too. The by products of this continuing introspection may be found in a number of seminars and stray papers contributed by some of the distinguished historians of India, in *Seminar 39 Past and Present*, *Problems of Historical Writing in India*, *Communalism in the Writing of Indian History*, *Historiography in Modern India*, *Historians and Historiography in Indian Languages*, and *The Past and Prejudice*. In this the very volume of writing on historiography itself bears testimony to the range and scope of revaluation and exploration.

Apart from the purely academic interest in ancient India, there is a stronger compelling need in post-independence era to rewrite the history of the country. Historians are expected to provide an expert professional answer to the basic question which confronts everybody who tries to do anything in India: What shall we do with our past? To do this they must find out what the past really was. Questions regarding national and cultural identity, change and changelessness, similarity and dissimilarity with the development of European civilization, stagnation and progress, role of conquests and spiritualism demand honest and convincing answers from the historian. In searching for the right answers everything from political history to periodization has to be reinterpreted.

A clearly noticeable tendency is the dissatisfaction with straightline political history, the history of heroes and empires. Disillusionment with the spiritual myth, the racial terminology and concepts like those of the dark ages and the golden ages, can be traced in most of the writings of

this period. There has been much groping in the dark in search of alternatives. New attempts are made to remedy the hasty generalizations, to correct the one-sided approaches and purposeful distortions, and to avoid the hypocrisy and superficiality of imperialist-nationalist histories. Perhaps the most significant new experimental approach to the conceptual problems of Indian history was initiated by the group of Marxist or near-Marxist historians in India. The early Marxist writers like S A Dange or P C Joshi who wrote on historical problems came from the political field outside the universities. They tried the economic interpretation of the Vedic Age or the Great Rebellion. But they were too amateurish, like the older generations of imperialist or nationalist historians. They replaced the less obvious and less well-defined dogmas with the clear cut Marxist dogma, and since their professional equipment was much less than their knowledge of Marxist literature, they failed to influence historians outside the party circle. The most important figure in the recent period who made a meaningful approach to ancient history in the light of Marxism was D D Kosambi. He left political history for a history of civilization, and that too not in the vague idealistic sense but in terms of material foundations and relations of production. In him we had a rare combination of the loyal Marxist and the original thinker, with intimate knowledge of archaeology, numismatics and ancient literature, and, above all, that precious uncommon gift of commonsense.

Exploding the Spiritual Myth

The Marxists were not, however, trying out anything entirely original because it was, to start with, only the Marxist variant of the European model which adopted the primitive-classical-feudal-capitalist frame with the emphasis on the material foundations and the use of the ready made formula of class conflict as the key to social change. Still they came up against all sorts of unexpected problems in their attempt to place Indian history on the Procrustean coach of Marxian time-schedule. Some of the more independent historians in this group have boldly faced this challenge and come out with interesting findings which may eventually enrich our understanding of the past even if they do not strengthen the Marxist position.

The best achievement of the Marxist group so far lies in breaking the spell of the spiritual myth even if their attempt to provide a purely materialistic rationale is left unfinished or inadequate. This myth, fostered by the orientalist and partially challenged by the utilitarians, had received a new lease of life in the writings of the nationalists. The force of its grip on the human mind may be felt even in such a work as *Discovery of India* by the secularist Nehru. He endowed India with a mystical and mysterious ability to conquer her conquerors, achieve synthesis and maintain unity in diversity. Even after the oriental studies came to be separated from the orientalist cult (thanks to the utilitarians and evangelists) the spiritual myth about India had survived in Europe. In fact this myth was

built into the concept of "the East" as different from "the West". The "East" was invented by the "West" in search of its own identity in the period of empire. This notion of East-West dichotomy, projected into the past along with European ascendancy, still vitiates objectivity in the study of Asia. In a variety of sophisticated forms it was useful to imperialists, and the same was twisted and employed by nationalists in self-defence. Even the contemporary Westocrats or Europhiles find its appeal irresistible. In this context the Marxist emphasis on materialism and the universalism of historical tendencies acquires great significance.

It is premature to state whether the Marxist conceptual framework and theory of causation are valid or not in the context of Indian history in terms of empirical evidence, but the great debate in the field of ancient Indian history in our own times is related to the relevance of the Marxist approach. It has exposed the nature of the limiting racial, continental and national preconceptions and proved to be an improvement upon the previous approaches. The Marxists boldly resisted the nationalist tendency to glorify and idealize and thus retrieved the factual content of history, and also rescued it from the cynical overtones which were almost always present in European writings after the nineteenth century. They rejected the suggestion of uniqueness, with its concomitant of mystery, which lingers on even in the title of such a work as A L Basham's *Wonder That Was India*, which offered the most balanced narrative account of ancient India without European bias while at the same time exhibiting a refusal or failure to explain and conceptualize.

Archaeology to the Rescue

The new historians do not feel the urge to suppress or gloss over facts regarding autocracy or tyranny, caste exclusiveness or oppression, slavery, stagnation in productive techniques and the regional imbalance in development within India. For them the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* did not contain authentic history or eternal religion as orthodox Hindus and fervent nationalists imagined; nor did these ancient texts represent a mere jumble of tales ready for psychoanalytical treatment as modern Westerners assumed. On the other hand these texts are examined in the light of archaeology for the evidence of their social background and for socially significant layers of myths bearing the stamp of class conflict and class interests at the time of composition and subsequent revision. Several new writers have taken delight in demolishing the myth of the Buddhist philosopher king, Asoka, and the myth of the golden age of the Gupta empire which European and Indian historians from Vincent Smith to Bhandarkar and Mukherji had cherished. Marxist allergy to racialism which they always equated, rather mistakenly, with fascism, rendered them largely immune to the Aryan-Dravidian complexes which had vitiated the thinking of not only Havell and Max Muller but penetrated deep into all European and Indian writings on the early history of India. Marxist antipathy for religion served as a corrective to the overdose of spiritualism

emanating from Vedic, Buddhist or other Brahminical studies in Europe and India. Thus the role of temples as owners of capital in gold and land has produced a new subject for investigation. Again archaeology with its inherent bias in favour of materialism has contributed a positively healthy influence.

Those textbook definitions of the caste system found in the Brahminical works, obviously the result of rationalizing afterthought, had succeeded in fooling historians for a pretty long time. Rightly questioned by sociologists and anthropologists in the West over the years, their grip on historians remained strong as ever, but the Marxists contributed to a better understanding of this institution by linking up caste with class and feudal tenure instead of race or virtue. At the same time their concern for the underdog diverted attention away from the Brahminical-Buddhist mainstream of social history towards the study of peasants, tribes, outcastes and slaves. These were previously taken to be only of peripheral interest to the historian, but now they tend to form the central core. Concepts like that of Sanskritization formulated by M N Srinivas and challenged by J F Staal and R J Miller, have not failed to excite the imagination of the new historians of ancient India. Romila Thapar's *History of India*, easily the best single-volume of general history of ancient India since Vincent Smith published his *Early History of India*, represents a landmark in historiography as it reflects in a fair proportion the impact of all the tendencies discussed above.

History as Social Science

These historians with a patently Marxist orientation—we are concerned only with those who possess a certain level of professional competence—did not follow the orthodox Marxist line. The most interesting case of deviation is related to “the Asiatic mode of production”, supposedly different from all the different stages of production observed in Europe. Historians had no evidence of this peculiar non-descript phenomenon and the phrase reminded them too much of others like “Oriental despotism” or “Indian mysticism” which characterized a non-European as a different specimen of the human race. Not only did these historians find evidence of change in place of complete stagnation, but they were pleasantly surprised by the strange parallelism between the feudal institutions of Europe and India in spite of difference in local idiom. This view of *Indian feudalism*, systematically elaborated by R S Sharma and his Patna school of associates, does apparently rest on an impressive array of documentary evidence. Moreover, it has provoked a highly interesting discussion forcing researchers to re-examine the institutional bases of traditional Indian society. It has already provided a new conceptual framework for the study of social history which had continued for a long time to be a matter of dull and dry narrative. The comparative study of social systems which it necessitated has also helped Indian historians to keep abreast of developments in historiography in other parts of the world. They are getting

more and more interested in the interaction of ideas and institutions and moving towards a position where history is regarded as a social science. Those who started with Marx have caught up with Marc Bloch and others of the same genre. Some of the revised programmes of postgraduate study in the new research centres like Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and some of the papers presented at the Indian History Congress or published in journals like the *Indian Historical Review* would indicate that it has been an enriching and rewarding experience.

The problems of historical writing with special reference to ancient India have been discussed in a number of books and papers by Indian scholars in the last two decades. A selective list in chronological order is presented here.

K A N Sastri and Ramanna, *Historical Method in Relation to Indian History*, Madras 1956.

D D Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay 1956.

U N Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, Bombay 1957, Chap. VI, VII, VIII.

C H Philips (Ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, Oxford 1961.

R Thapar and others, *Seminar 39-Past and Present*, New Delhi 1962.

A K Narain and others, *Problems of Historical Writing in India*, Benares 1966.

R S Sharma, *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, Bombay 1966.

R Thapar, "Interpretation of Ancient Indian Society", *History and Theory*, Vol VII, 1968.

R C Majumdar, *Historiography in Modern India*, Bombay 1970.

S C Malik (Ed.), *Indian Civilization: the First Phase; Problems of a Source Book*, Simla 1971.

M G S Narayanan, "Perspectives in Indian History" NCERT Seminar on *Textbooks of Indian History*, New Delhi 1971.

S P Sen (Ed.), *Historians and Historiography in Modern India*, Calcutta 1973.

J P De Souza (Ed.), *Historiography in Indian Languages*, New Delhi 1973.

R Thapar, *The Past and Prejudice*, New Delhi 1973.

N Subrahmanian, *Historiography*, Madurai 1974.

R S Sharma and D N Jha, "The Economic History of India up to AD 1200: Trends and Prospects", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol XVII Part I, 1974.

ROGER BARTRA

Peasants and Political Power in Mexico

THE AGRARIAN structures and the political situations which arise from them have been and continue to be a challenge for Marxist analysts. There have been many such analysts who have become lost in the labyrinth of rural life without obtaining more than either simplistic schemes or interminable descriptions of more or less incomprehensible phenomena.

This statement is particularly the case in work on Latin America: it is noteworthy that those who are supposedly Marxists have, in the process of explaining the evolution of agriculture, completely ignored precisely those tools which Marx has provided for this purpose. At best, most analyses of the Latin American agrarian situation have been limited to populist critiques. This situation has recently begun to change; however, we are still tied to the habits of the past.¹

While this article is basically theoretical, it reflects the experiences of concrete research and is a synthesis of these experiences.² The models presented here are posited as valid for Mexican agrarian reality. To a certain point, they may be generalized to Latin America and certain other countries in the so called Third World. One must only add that this work has a preliminary character. While they have left us a number of theoretical problems, the classical works of Marx, Engels and Lenin are

the cornerstone of any understanding of Mexican and Latin American reality.

A reading of the last (and unfinished) chapter of *Capital* must have left interpreters of the agrarian structure of a country such as Mexico in a quandary: "The owners of labour-power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit, and ground rent, in other words, wage labourers, capitalists and landowners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production"³

Where do we place the most numerous class in our rural zones, the peasants? Answers to this problem have been of two sorts: (1) in the Mexican countryside, either there are precapitalist remnants in the countryside which require the model of the feudal mode of production to explain; or (2) the capitalist mode of production is the dominant one, and therefore, the peasants are nothing but rural proletarians. Both of these positions have abandoned the fundamental concepts of class structure: wage-labour, profit, and ground rent. We will try to show that, given that Mexico is a capitalist country, it is not possible to understand its agrarian structure except on the basis of these concepts. It does not follow from this dominance that the peasants are rural proletarians. This is so because Mexico is not simply a capitalist country, but it is also an "undeveloped country," dependent upon imperialism.

Paths to Capitalist Agriculture

If there is anything clear in the Leninist interpretation of agrarian evolution, it is that such evolution cannot be understood in strictly economic terms: the political dimension plays a role so important that without it one cannot begin to perceive the heart of the problem. This is especially evident in Mexico where the modalities adopted in agriculture cannot be understood without a previous study of the roots of the agrarian reform generated in the heat of the 1910—1917 Revolution. For Lenin, there are two roads of capitalist development in agriculture:

- 1) The old land-holding economy, bound to serfdom, which slowly transforms into an entrepreneurial capitalist economy ("Junker" type) by means of the internal evolution of the latifundia.
- 2) A revolutionary process which destroys the old land-holding economy, the large holding and the systems of serfdom; giving rise to petty peasant economy while itself decomposing before the onslaught of capitalism.⁴

Whichever of the two paths to capitalist agriculture is followed, each consists in a process of depeasanting and the substitution of the system of wage labour for the system of corvée. Depeasanting is, in reality, the birth of an agrarian proletariat wrenched, with greater or lesser violence, from the soil; this can only occur parallel to an accumulation of capital and a concentration of production which has, as its base, non-salaried labour. This process follows along the lines of what Marx terms

the primitive accumulation of capital.

In the panorama painted by Lenin, and in his brilliant analysis of the evolution of Russian agriculture, the concept of ground rent (which for Marx constitutes the cornerstone of capitalist development in agriculture) appears to be missing. It is evident, however, from many of his works, that Lenin was familiar with this concept.⁵ Nevertheless, the references to this concept are of a theoretical tone: the direct application of the concept of ground rent to the Russian agrarian problem is rare. In *Capital*, on the other hand, working from the English example, Marx dedicates much of Volume III to an account of the birth, development, and peculiarities of capitalist agriculture.

Ground rent is the key concept which permits an explanation of the existence of a landholding class which extracts the said rent without affecting the realization of profit by another social class: the agrarian bourgeois. Using the English example, there are three agricultural classes: the landholding, the capitalist, and the agricultural worker. It is only the existence of surplus profit in agricultural production which can explain how the capitalist reaps the average rate of profit while additionally providing rent to the proprietor of the land.

To simplify, the origin of such surplus profit in agriculture is explained by reason of two things: (a) it is due to the fact that production of certain lands offers some special advantages (fertility, nearness to markets, possibilities of a more rapid return on capital) that various forms of so called differential rent are generated. Nevertheless, even the poorest of lands produce rent, which fact can be explained as due to (b) the lower organic composition of capital in agriculture (technological backwardness, more labour-intensive) which produces a greater surplus value than that which is the average rate for a country. This absolute rent has its origin in the private ownership of land. Absolute rent as such disappears as private property disappears, in fact it approaches zero inasmuch as the long-term tendency (imposed by technological development) is that of a constant increase in the organic composition of capital in agriculture.

Mexican Path

Later on we will furnish a more detailed account of this, along with its application to Mexican reality. We may now inquire: why did Lenin not utilize this focus in the analysis of Russian agriculture? May we consider that there are three different paths of capitalist development in agriculture: the "Junker," the "farmer," and the "English"? We will find an answer to this question, albeit a partial one, below.

It is clear that Mexican agriculture at the turn of the century was developing along a road that could be called a Porfirian version of the "via Junker". The revolution of 1910-1917, and above all the somewhat belated reforms of the decade of the 1930s, completely stymied this growth. The liquidation of the traditional *latifundista* forms and of the semi-feudal semi-slave systems of labour exploitation, together with the birth and

development of the *ejidos* and small peasant holdings, seemed to indicate that Mexico was taking the "via farmer." However, some peculiarities of the ejidal system blocked, or at least presented important obstacles to, the process of depeasanting: the ejidal land was kept outside the market by law. As state property, the ejidal parcels were given in usufruct, and could neither be sold nor leased. This was evidently an obstacle to capitalist development in agriculture. It is true that this only happened in the ejidal sector, while the rest of agriculture suffered the consequences of capitalist development. We are not suggesting that there was no capitalist development in the ejidal sector, but that the capitalist process was slowed down. Does this mean that the Mexican revolution had an anti-capitalist character, or simply that it was originally a popular process which failed to reach its goals?

The answer to this question has been given by one of the agrarian theoreticians of the Mexican government in his polemic with Rene Dumont, the latter having not long before made harsh criticisms of La Reforma Agraria (the Agrarian Reform) from a bourgeois-technocratic point of view. Marco Antonio Duran, the government theoretician, responded in these terms:

With the elimination of those ignorant peasants whose property rights would be transferred to those selected for their technological virtues, we would counteract, according to Dumont, these gloomy prospects, and besides, we could get rid of the minifundios which (also according to M Dumont) constitute the cardinal sin of La Reforma Agraria. M Dumont requires acts of contrition that will rid it of the democratic heresies that have been the inspiration to date of the distribution of land and of the new forms of ownership.⁶

Duran then tells us that what is important is the so-called "social function of the new forms of ownership"; after a few demagogic platitudes the truth finally emerges:

Among the social functions of the ownership of the land one must include those of political nature, whose most simple and clear expression is that which has produced a tranquility which has been the benefit of the struggles for progress... political functions are very complex since they include the *maintenance of hope for the peasants* while at the same time it is possible to create the instruments that will effectively eliminate poverty through the organizations formed by the people that have become new land recipients. These organizations will strive for revolutionary achievements while at the same time *give faith and hope to the peasants* and prevent outbursts of impatience.⁷ (Emphasis added.)

The function of the ejido and the minifundio can only be understood by focusing simultaneously upon the economic and political levels. Their function is to act as a shock absorber which allows control of the social violence inherent in the process of the rapid expansion of the

capitalist sector. Without this "shock absorber" the Mexican capitalist state could not guarantee to the rural bourgeoisie the rapid economic growth that it has enjoyed. The victims of the "*via Mexicana*" become evident by a glance at table I.

TABLE I
INDICES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
(Base 1934-38=100)

COUNTRY	1965
Argentina	133
Brazil	196
Chile	166
Colombia	227
Cuba	153
Mexico	324
Peru	193
Uruguay	135

SOURCE: Edmundo Flores, "Como Funciona el Sector Agropecuario de Mexico", *Revista del Mexico Agrario*, 1-2, January-February 1969.

A Gilly and M Gutelman correctly assert that Mexico in the nineteenth century proceeded along the path of primitive accumulation of capital.⁸ The application of the liberal principles of the *Revolucion de Ayutla* which led to the disentailment of 1856, the expropriation of the property of the Church and Indian communities is a phenomenon which must be understood as part of a process of primitive capitalist accumulation. The disentailment law which presumed to create small agricultural holdings in fact brought about the further concentration of land and above all, opened the land to market transaction. The activities of the famous "compañias deslindadores" also formed part of this primitive accumulation. The *Yaqui* wars which deprived these Indians of their fertile lands in the *Yaqui* valley gave a "colonial" character to this process.

Roots of Zapatista Revolution

But the process of capitalist accumulation was conditioned by the predominance of foreign capital and by the weakness of the concentration of the national money capital. Of the two facets of the primitive accumulation of capital (separation of the producer from his means of production and the accumulation of wealth available for productive investment) only the first was carried out. The process, therefore, remained incomplete and became a vicious circle with violence as the only way out.

In effect, during the last years of the nineteenth century, this dispossession of the peasantry and the concentration of land in *latifundios* acquired an increased velocity. This rapid process had no corresponding growth of capital in the agricultural sector, so that the *latifundios* were

characterized by extremely low levels of capitalist investment. The organic composition of capital in the agricultural sector remained very low. The latifundios utilized superexploitation of the labour force (even using feudal forms). In this way they closed the door to the possibility of a "Junker" type development in agriculture and thereby opened the door to revolution.

Thus the paradox: the pangs of primitive accumulations of capital generated a bourgeois revolution against the bourgeoisie itself in which the ravished peasant masses played the role of actor (but not the leading one). The violence of a primitive accumulation thrown out of equilibrium by dependence upon imperialism—which is the *causa profunda* of the Mexican revolution—explains why the centre of the revolutionary agrarian movement, Emiliano Zapata, was in the state of Morelos where the peasants had been expropriated by a well-developed system of capitalist *haciendas*. In this zone, capitalist development of agriculture was important with its sugar plantations and sugar mills. From the days of Cardenas on, the Mexican government, inheritor of the revolution, has taken care of controlling the process of capitalist development in agriculture, since its own experience has shown that the brutal exploitation of the peasantry can bring about a revolution which today would surely unchain a socialist revolution.

In conclusion, the "via Mexicana" is nothing more than a version, in the context of a dependent country, of the "via farmer" in the capitalist development of agriculture.

Process of Capital Accumulation

Several recent studies⁹ of Mexican agriculture stress the existence of two sectors: a privileged, small, capitalist sector which produces mostly for export and which generates the largest portion of marketed agricultural products; and a second, large sector of poor peasants, living close to the subsistence level, which comprises the majority of the rural population. The problem which has faced and which still faces the Mexican bourgeoisie holding state power is that of how to obtain such an increase in agricultural production as to meet the demand of the national and international industrial and urban demand. To accomplish this, it had to channel the surpluses out of the agricultural sector prevent the redistribution of this surplus among the impoverished rural masses, without bringing about in the process any "outbursts of impatience" from the masses. The only solution was the one sketched in the previous section which produced, as one result, the apparent dualism of the Mexican agrarian structure.

This solution would have come as no surprise to Rosa Luxemburg, who posited that the process of capital accumulation can only take place as a relation between capital and an environment of non-capitalist social formations.¹⁰ While her position is a debatable one as it relates to advanced capitalist development, it undoubtedly reflects the situation of backward countries such as Mexico. Here, both the economic and political

situation force agricultural production into a vicious circle, in which the capitalist sector cannot exist without a non-capitalist environment. But to develop, this capitalist sector must completely destroy the non-capitalist sector. This event would lead to a crisis which has to be prevented by giving a measure of protection to the non-capitalist sector.

This is the blind alley in which countries dependent upon imperialism find themselves. The economic relation with the metropolis perpetuates a condition of underdevelopment and gives rise to a process that could be defined as permanent primitive accumulation.

The only difference that appears between Marx's analysis of primitive accumulation and the Mexican case (or that of underdeveloped countries in general) is that in the latter, the process appears as permanent, without the next step: the transition to mature capitalism. This is actually what is behind the notion of uneven and combined development. It should be clear that this situation of permanent primitive accumulation is a dual system in appearance only. In reality, it is only one structure whose constituent parts cannot be understood apart from the whole. The constituent parts—the capitalist sector and the non-capitalist sector—are two modes of production that together make up one sub-capitalist socio-economic formation.

Agriculture and the Capitalist Market

The inherent tendencies of development of the capitalist sector—concentration of land and capital, mechanization—directly imply the erosion and destruction of the non-capitalist peasant economy. This would entail the expropriation of large masses of the population, which together with the already high demographic growth rate, would bring into being an enormous reserve army of the unemployed which would easily fill the ranks of a truly popular revolutionary army. The bourgeoisie, in addition to being able to guarantee the reproduction of capital, must guarantee the reproduction of the social and political relations that allow the existence of the capitalist system. Such a guarantee necessitates control over the process of accumulation.

This is the *raison d'être* of the inefficient ejido and of the survival of the minifundio. As we shall see later, there are also strictly economic reasons which allow the existence of the apparently dualistic system.

The existing situation is the direct product and result of the dependence relation between Mexico and the imperialist countries, specifically the United States. Samir Amin makes, in this connection, the following point:

Every time the capitalist mode of production enters into a relationship with precapitalist modes of production, where the former dominates the latter, there appears a transfer of value from the latter to the former, through mechanisms of primitive accumulation. These mechanisms belong as much in contemporary times as they did in the prehistory of capitalism. The theory of accumulation on a world

scale seeks to study these rejuvenated and persistent forms of primitive accumulation on behalf of the capitalist centre.¹¹

The transfers of value from backward to developed countries have much of their origin in irregularities in the organic composition of capital. In fact, what takes place is the transfer of surplus value from capitalists in the backward countries to capitalists in the advanced countries, which results in what Palloix has called "the dependence of one bourgeois class on another bourgeois class in which the first is expropriated of a surplus value that it could utilize for capital accumulation were it not for the existence of imperialist relations"¹².

To this result, we must certainly add the direct extraction of surplus value by means of foreign capital investments in Mexico.

In agriculture, the imperialist relation is realized essentially through the mechanism of the market where the aforementioned value transfers take place. In this process of unequal exchange, the low organic composition of agricultural capital gives occasion to the transfer which becomes possible because the prices of products are fixed in the international markets. This is opposed to what happens in the national agricultural market—at least in theory—where prices are determined by the conditions on the worst of cultivatable lands, which allows the existence of ground rent in every case. In the international market, the average rate of profit is applied. This forces those who produce under conditions of underdevelopment to give up ground rent and, sometimes, even part of the surplus value to the capitalists in the advanced countries.¹³

Ground Rent

A similar mechanism operates in the unequal exchange between town and country. A recent calculation established that in Mexico, between 1942 and 1960 the agricultural sector transferred more than three billion pesos to the rest of the economy; the same study shows that the value of this transfer during the years 1948 and 1951 reached 16 per cent and 15 per cent respectively of the agricultural product. (These figures include only market prices, fiscal, and banking operations.) This transfer must actually be considerably higher, as the calculations did not take into account the terms of trade and private loans (generally usurious).

In the case of the relation between agriculture and commerce or industry, one cannot posit the problem as one of the simple transfer of surplus value from the hands of a rural proletariat into the hands of a financial, commercial or industrial bourgeoisie. The rural sector is much too complex to permit such a crude analysis.

To fully understand the problem at hand we must return for a moment to the topic of ground rent which also arises from mechanisms related to the determination of prices and the average rate of profit. In the final analysis, ground rent constitutes a transfer of surplus value (or surplus product) from capitalists to landowners.

The estimates in table II below are for ground rent in corn

RT and not RA which is obtained in table II since $Pl=G$ and $Pi=Cp^{14}$.

One of the most important conclusions that arises from the analysis of ground rent in Mexico is that the small peasant economy (whether "ejidal" or not) is completely integrated into the capitalist system and that its peculiarities cannot be understood without the use of the conceptual tools appropriate to capitalist economies (wage labour, profit, and ground rent), albeit with appropriate adaptation to specific conditions.

These specific conditions which stem from a short-circuited process of primitive accumulation indicate the existence of a dialectic internal to the agrarian structure, which consists in the union and struggle of two systems of production: the capitalist mode and the petty commodity mode of production. In Mexico, as in revolutionary Russia, the words of Lenin still ring true:

The system of social-economic relations existing among the peasantry (agricultural and village community) shows us that all those contradictions are present which are inherent in every commodity economy and every order of capitalism... It is these contradictions that show us clearly and irrefutably that the system of economic relations in the "community" village does not at all constitute a special economic form ("popular production," etc.) but is an ordinary petty-bourgeois one. Despite the theories that have prevailed here during the past half century, the Russian community peasantry are not antagonists of capitalism, but on the contrary, are its deepest and most durable foundations.¹⁵

Petty Commodity Production

In the small peasant economy, the owner (the *ejidatario* or usufructuary) is at the same time the direct producer; he does not utilize hired wage-labor. In this case, his profit (and whatever ground rent there might be) are inseparable from the remuneration from his own labour. In reality profit in a peasant economy is the wage that the producer pays to himself. The precarious conditions in which the Mexican peasant lives cause his "profit" to be often less than average profit. What is more, the peasant may not even be able to cover the value of his own labour power (as calculated according to official regional minimum wage rates).

If capitalist accounting methods are applied, the result is that all peasant "enterprises" operate at a deficit; this point, which has been noticed in several studies, has not been analyzed to its ultimate conclusions. Witold Kula, for example, is of the opinion that "this conclusion according to which half-of-mankind today engages in productive activity characterized by constant deficit is a *reductio ad absurdum*".¹⁶ But this is not so. Half of mankind does operate with a constant deficit, which is to say, in a more rational language, that it is constantly exploited. The problem lies in the double aspect of the peasant's income: it is at the same time "profit" and "self-paid wage." In the peasant economy, there is no separation between variable capital and surplus value; both take the

appearance of profit or wage, without possible separation of the two as in the capitalist enterprise. This is the core of the specificity of petty commodity production.

However, is it appropriate to apply the categories of wage and profit to this non-capitalist market? In this situation, in which the peasant produces for the market under conditions which are not capitalist, there is a transfer of value towards the capitalist sector. To the extent that the peasant cannot appropriate that which would be ground rent, whatever he retains should be classified as "wages," and the rest (profit, and ground rent, if any) goes to the other sectors of the economy.

As an example, let us utilize table II once again. In the case of land type A, the variable capital is actually $500 - 286 = \$214$ ($V - P_l$) since $V = 500$ is only a hypothetical figure derived from the minimum wage in the region. In this case, the peasant loses his surplus value and part of his variable capital. In the case of land type C, the average profit is obtained. Therefore, in all lands that are less fertile than those of type C, the capitalist system is excluded; however, it is in these lands where the vast majority of the peasant population of Mexico works.

Let us now suppose that type A land, operated by a peasant family has the same degree of fertility as land type C, operated by a capitalist enterprise. Thus we have

TABLE III

	C	V	P_l	Value	Price
Type A	136	564		700	700
Type C	136	500	64	700	700

Given a decline in commodity price to \$500, we would obtain

TABLE IV

	C	V	P_l	Value	Price
Type A	136	364		500	500
Type C	136	500	-136	700	500

Evidently, the capitalistic enterprise in C cannot subsist, and it must stop production. On the contrary, the land parcel A continues to produce, transferring by way of the market considerable surplus labour. Theoretically, the peasant will continue to do so as long as the "profit" is enough to support his family; of course, the limits of resistance may not be that low, depending upon the possibilities that the industrial market for labour offers.

Super-exploitation

Theoreticians of the Mexican agrarian reform have traditionally refused to accept the inefficiency of the ejido and of the minifundio. To accept it would be to accept that the agrarian reform has given rise to the development of a system of exploitation. Reyes Osorio has attempted to

demonstrate the efficiency of the ejidos and the minifundios by estimating "efficiency" as a relation between outputs and inputs. Thus, the ejidal sector produced in 1960 approximately 35 per cent of the net total agrarian product, even though this sector had only utilized lands equal to 34 per cent of the total value of the lands and 27 per cent of agricultural capital. Further, non-ejidal lands larger than five hectares contributed 58 per cent of the net total agricultural product despite their utilization of lands valued at 63 per cent of the total value of the lands and 66 per cent of the total agricultural capital (land and cattle not included as capital). Those non-ejidal parcels smaller than five hectares contributed 7 per cent of the net agricultural product while they possessed 3 per cent of the total value of the lands: their utilization of a scarce resource was far more "efficient" than the other two systems of land tenures.¹⁷

From the point of view of production, we have that for each peso of total inputs (like land, capital, wages, fertilizer) the large farms obtain \$1.88 of produce; the ejidos, \$2.35, and the minifundios, \$2.88. Our "theoretician" concludes: "In reality the great disparity in income that we observe in the agricultural sector is not the consequence of inefficiency, but simply the consequence of the low level of productive resources".¹⁸

Unfortunately, Reyes Osorio forgets to include in his list of "inputs" the value of the labour power of the small peasant and the ejidatario. If this value is taken into consideration, the famous "efficiency" becomes super-exploitation. If data are manipulated in an unscientific fashion, and the peasant income is seen as profit and not as wages (as "input", as variable capital), then it is a simple task to disguise the wretched peasant economy as "efficient."

Peasant-Proletarian Alliance

As Lenin said, "the existence of a small peasantry in every capitalist society is due not to the technical superiority of small production in agriculture, but to the fact that the small peasants reduce the level of their requirements below that of the wage-workers and tax their energies far more than the latter do."¹⁹ One aspect that should be emphasized is that there is a structural relation between the small peasant economy and the capitalist agricultural enterprise, whether or not the latter is based upon a latifundio. The basis of the exploitation is not the unequal distribution of land, but the deeper mechanism that causes this inequality to intensify. To accept that the problem is the unequal distribution of the means of production leads to the populist bromide according to which it is necessary to increase land distribution in order to strengthen the small peasant economy.

Facts show clearly that as long as the agrarian structure is dominated by the capitalist market, the inevitable tendency would be toward a deeper differentiation of the peasantry and the proletarianization and pauperization of the lower strata of the peasantry. The non-capitalist peasant sector is subjected to a capitalist market but is not in a position to

influence the determination of agricultural prices. As shown above, the individual price of production in this non-capitalist sector is lower than in the capitalist sector which is itself the determiner of the prices. In this manner, the small peasant, who is obliged to limit his aspirations to the acquisition—perhaps—of the necessary wage, “gives gratuitously to society” (Marx) a portion of his surplus labour and, sometimes, a portion of the necessary labour.

It is evident that the poor peasant is interested in the rise of agricultural prices, something with which the rural bourgeoisie is in agreement. On the other hand, this affects the aspirations of the urban working class. Thus, this apparent conflict has sustained the thesis that in Latin America conditions are such as to make impossible a political alliance between the peasantry and the proletariat.²⁰ We shall attempt to clarify this problem by providing answers to the following questions: Which part of society benefits from the peasants' surplus labour? Does the working class benefit from it?

The poor peasant sells his products in the market for a value lower than their real value; that is to say, given his economic backwardness and low productivity, he is subject to a relation of unequal exchange. The exclusive beneficiaries of this relation are the rural bourgeoisie, the commercial capitalists, and the industrialists. It is asserted that if prices of agricultural products went up, it would affect all urban groups. Is the urban working class affected? Only in a transitory fashion because, in the long run, the rise in the cost of living will force the capitalist to raise their investment in variable capital.

Common Enemy

In Mexico, there is also the official policy of price regulation which presumably protects the small peasant. But, as Henri Lefebvre²¹ pointed out, this is not correct: in reality, technological development in agriculture (which entails the abandonment of the poorer lands) tends to depress differential rents even more. The truth of the matter is that the prices of some products are kept very high under the pretext of protecting the poor peasants on the worst land. One example of this practice has been the maintenance of the price of wheat above the world market price, which has allowed its production in irrigated zones to substitute for imported wheat.

A recent study of Mexican agriculture reveals in general terms the amount of the value transfers among the different agrarian sectors²². Sector I obtains profit of \$5,341 million on a surplus product of \$1,201 million. Sector II (minifundios) obtain a profit of \$367 million on a surplus product of \$2,720 million. The ejidal sector extracts a surplus product of \$4,560 million, but only reaps a profit of \$2,773 million. The evident beneficiary of this transfer is Sector I, which is composed of large landholdings with a higher organic composition of capital.

It is therefore evident that the rural masses are exploited by capital

to the extent that they develop in an independent manner, they become an obstacle to the process of capitalist development itself. In Mexico, as in many other backward and dependent countries, the number of merchants, usurers, and middlemen who are enmeshed in the net of urban-rural relations reach massive proportions. Side by side with large merchants and usurers, there lies a whole stratum of small tradesmen and petty usurers who challenge the supremacy of the bigger ones over a few small crumbs. As Lenin said: "The independent development of merchant capital is in inverse proportion to the degree of development of capitalist production; the greater the development of merchant and usurer capital, the smaller the development of industrial capital."²³

The existence of middlemen and their *modus operandi* is very significant. This is clear in the case of cotton which is a key export.²⁴ Cotton and coffee are the most sensitive elements of the Mexican balance of trade. In this case, the process of unequal exchange directly connects the Mexican agrarian structure with imperialism; the drop in the price of cotton and coffee in 1967 caused loss in export revenues (the total for the year being 737 millions of pesos). The problem goes even further; the Mexican producers do not sell their cotton production in the international markets, but do it through Anderson Clayton, Hohenberg International, MacFadden and other US-based enterprises which monopolize the harvest and provide credit, seed and fertilizer to the producers.

Modes of Production

The thesis that underlies what we have so far described is this: in the Mexican rural sector there is a single socio-economic structure which is perfectly integrated into the totality of the Mexican sub-capitalist economy; the apparent dualism that is observable is only the form adopted by the "underdevelopment" of the economic structure. The contradictions internal to such a structure are far more complex than can be deciphered through the use of such concepts as dualism, pluralism, or marginalism.

To the analysis already presented, we must add an attempt to fathom the realities of class division within rural Mexican society. The notion of a mode of production will allow the sketching of a class structure. We have thus far spoken of the individual dialectic of two systems: petty commodity economy and capitalist economy, which correspond evidently to two modes of production. At this level of abstraction a third system must be added, of which only remnants survive: the natural economy of self-subsistence.

These three modes of production of the Mexican rural sector do not exist autonomously, but together they constitute a single structure or *rural socio-economic formation*. It is to the specific contradictions of this formation that we have been directing our attention. These derive essentially from the problem of permanent primitive accumulation.

A new perspective is opened up through the use of the concept of

mode of production. In Marxist theory, each mode of production is characterized by a particular class structure; but the petty commodity mode of production is not a class system; what is more, it is a secondary mode of production. This is to say that it cannot exist in isolation, nor can it even dominate a given socio-economic formation. It is this double condition of being classless and secondary which causes its population to be in a "class condition toward the outside" while it maintains "classless relations within the system."²⁵

The transfers of surplus products, which impoverish and proletarianize the lower strata, are the basis of the class relations of the peasant with the "outside." This complex situation arises because class contradiction can only be explained in the relation between two modes of production. That is, the contradiction can be found at the level of the total socio-economic formation.

The capitalist agricultural enterprise, however, is part of a mode of production with class contradictions which set up an antagonism between the agrarian bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. The mechanism of exploitation is the same as in any capitalist economy: surplus value. However, the capitalist sector in Mexican agriculture has special characteristics which stem from technological backwardness, the low level of capital-intensity, and its dependence upon international markets. The classic "English model" of Marx—with its significant separation between landowners and capitalists—cannot be used to explain Mexican reality; not because it is not a valid model, but because of the large deformations of the agrarian structure in Mexico. It is clear, for instance, that the latifundios do not play the same role in Mexico as do the landowners in an advanced capitalist system. They have traditionally been considered characterized as feudal remnants. We consider such an assertion basically incorrect today and, to a large extent, even in the years previous to the Cardenas reforms in 1936-1940.

Social Classes

The latifundio system, despite all its feudal aspects, is basically the expression of a capitalist mode of production which is backward, dependent, and deformed. Its specificity consists in a tremendous concentration of land with a very low concentration of capital. But its existence has been, and is, one of the most important pivots of the process of primitive capitalist accumulation.

The scanty remnants of a natural economy of self-subsistence are almost completely integrated into the peasant economy, and they constitute an escape valve which allows the peasants to attempt to balance the effects of capitalist exploitation.

Strictly speaking, therefore, there are three fundamental social classes in the Mexican countryside: the agrarian bourgeoisie, the rural proletariat, and the peasantry. The definitions of these classes is based upon the relations that these groups hold to the historically determined

modes of production.²⁶ Insofar as they relate to different forms of land tenure, such concrete aspects as farm size, social peculiarities, ethnic differences, and political forms will permit the establishment of the existence of different strata and different social levels.

The metaphor of a Mexican Bonapartism based upon the peasant masses has recently been used to describe the political structure of the country. "Caudillismo," "caciquismo," and "presidencialismo" are seeming examples of what Marx called—and Gramsci insisted—Caesarism or Bonapartism. This is, of course, an insufficient although excellent concept for an understanding of the political structure. The words of Marx in reference to the French peasants seem to have been written for Mexico.²⁷

The peasantry is incapable of controlling power, or of leading an alliance of classes, or of self-representation. This is so because of the mode of production wherein the peasant lives and where he is exploited as a wage labourer despite or because of his petty bourgeois nature. In this further contradiction, we observe one of the most profound roots of the equally paradoxical political structure of Mexico.

The Mexican revolution is the history of the struggle and the alliances between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry; a history which takes place amidst the anguishing contradictions which exist between a politically impotent peasantry and a sector of the bourgeoisie that cannot find an alternative political solution to the landholding, "porfirista" bourgeoisie that was overthrown.

The bloc of classes and the reformist pact achieved by Lazaro Cardenas twenty years after the official "end" of the revolution were the political resolution of the contradictions and the point of departure of the present Mexican system.

Democratic Bonapartism

The "vacuum of power" and the equilibrium of the various sectors during the revolution, as with the post-revolutionary "caudillismo" and the Cardenas populism, can be explained in terms of a Bonapartism where "strong man," caudillo, or president wins the support of the "third forces"—the peasantry. Caesar, however, had his Brutus, and Napoleon his Waterloo; even the tragi-comic character of Louis Bonaparte encountered the beginning of the end in Queretaro. But where is the end of Mexican Bonapartism?

Between 1940 and 1946, the class alliance established by Cardenas, which implied (through some intermediation) the participation of the peasantry in political power, was completely destroyed. The break-up took place between the take-over of Avila Camacho (who had, incidentally, been nominated to the presidency by the Confederacion Nacional Campesina) and the reforms introduced by Miguel Aleman to article 27 of the constitution which guarantee the protection of landowners.

What needs to be explained is the continuity of the political system forged during the Cardenas period with those earlier days, what politicians

call the institutionalization of the Mexican revolution and what we have called democratic Bonapartism.²⁸ Nonetheless, the concept of Bonapartism, which explains the moments of crisis and the political impotence of the peasantry, only exists upon the basis of an analysis that is yet to be made.

Once the bourgeois revolution is completed, the people in power must occupy themselves with the task of maintaining and assuring their continuity in state power.

The economic system can maintain the process of reproduction of the productive forces (means of production and labour power) in the described conditions. But it is also necessary to maintain what Althusser calls the reproduction of the relations of production²⁹. As he clearly indicates, in order to understand the latter process, it becomes necessary to understand the role of the political-ideological superstructure. This problem has been expressed by the Mexican bourgeoisie in its own terms: the necessity of institutionalizing the revolution. The role of the state is fundamental, and the future of the country will depend upon the type of power that the bourgeoisie will consolidate.

Political System

The bourgeois state faces the problem of assuring the continuity of a structure-in-a-process-of transition. While the contradictions in the agrarian structure are such as to move the system towards capitalism, the concrete condition of backwardness makes the situation a volatile one, a situation where the whole political system could be destroyed.

The process, then, must be controlled, even halted, in order to keep some of the rural population tied to the land. With la Reforma Agraria, through the ejidos and minifundios, and through the political control of the rural masses, the Mexican state secures the reproduction of the rural relations of production. It maintains the constant state of violence, struggle, and expropriation characteristic of the process of permanent primitive accumulation.

A double game is played in order to manage this political success: a populism that partially satisfies peasant demands, and a defence of the interests of the big agrarian bourgeoisie. Both facets of this game have profound historical roots: from the Zapatista revolution are extracted the slogans, from the Cardenas reforms, its reality. The capitalist agrarian interests take from the liberals the abstract defence of private property, and consolidation from the political precepts of Miguel Aleman.

Besides consisting of two intertwined political lines, throughout the agrarian history of Mexico there are also two different political structures covered by the same roof. One is the structure of direct power of the bourgeoisie; the other, a structure of mediation. The former manifests itself in the economic power of the agrarian bourgeoisie which manipulates public and private mechanisms for its own development. The latter is made up of "revolutionary" organizations and institutions which "defend"

the peasant: the Confederacion Nacional Campesina, the Ligas de Comunidades Agrarias, some of the activity of the Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios y Colonizacion, and so on.

The structure of mediation had its origin in the consolidation of the official party (accomplished by Calles) and in the institutionalization of popular and peasant participation in the state (achieved by Cardenas). Of course, the popular masses lost very promptly their participation in the state and such "participation" degenerated into a bureaucratic system which in some measure obtains the support (spontaneous or forced) of the poor classes, and which manipulates the situation to save the interests of the classes in power. The high degree of institutionalization (legal or traditional) acquired by these mediating structures goes a long way towards explaining the famous stability of the Mexican political system.

This deformed version of bourgeois democracy stretches its tentacles into the most remote sectors of rural Mexico. The keystone of the structure of mediation is its tolerance and use of popular participation of the peasants up to a certain level, above which all signals are reversed and, in a peculiar political symbiosis, move in favor of the interests of the big agrarian bourgeoisie. The most lucid leaders of the latter group understand that the process of capitalist development is safely maintained through popular rhetoric and action. Victor Flores Olea is quite correct when he states that "We feel that we find an essential operativeness, a functional correspondence that explains our stability in the midst of our polarizing development, in the traits of our economic structure, with its uneven and combined growth and in the characteristics of our political system."⁹⁰

Mediation Structure

The existence of two structures of domination is observable not only at the institutional level. It is also expressed in the divisions of the rural bourgeoisie. One sector within the bourgeoisie promotes the elimination of the ejido and attempts to block the timid efforts of la Reforma Agraria. Another sector defends la Reforma and declares its support of "co-existence" of the private and ejidal sectors. The former tries thoughtlessly to promote direct forms of domination; the latter understands the necessity of mediating structures. The struggle between these two sub-sections explains the peculiarities of the different agrarian policies of the different administrations.

In the long run, it is the interest of the bourgeois class that prevails upon the structure of mediation. This is quite obvious at the present time, when the distribution of land among the peasantry becomes more and more difficult, both because of the existence of well-disguised latifundios as well as the opposition of the capitalist agrarian sector. The development of capitalism faces an obstacle in the existing forms of land tenure, such as the minifundios, the ejido, and the common lands; such forms thwart free commodity circulation, investment, and the concentration of

capital in agriculture. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the new Federal Law of Agrarian Reform recently enacted should hide, under a variety of legal legerdemain, an attempt to adapt the law to the development of capitalism in the countryside.

The previous *Código Agrario* implied the (legal) impossibility of leasing ejidal lands which in turn condemned this sector to minifundista tasks. In the ejidos, there are only two escapes from stagnation into modernization: concentration of capital and collectivization. The second alternative—as is well known—has been effectively blocked by “revolutionary” governments, and the few attempts at collectivization were short-lived or misguided. It was obvious, however, that the prohibition on leasing (and the fact that ejidatarios are not considered by private bankers to be worthy of credit) cut short the first alternative. It is well known, of course, that illegal leasing is quite common in irrigated districts or in developed agricultural areas. In these cases, the ejidatarios possess no capital (nor the possibilities of obtaining it), but there is no dearth of capitalists who are willing to lease and put together several parcels under one enterprise and to hire the ejidatarios as wage-earners. This goes to show the inexorability of economic development and their lack of respect for legislation.

Legislation usually lags behind developments in actual reality; thus the new agrarian reform law allows the leasing of ejidal parcels¹. This indicates the beginning of a serious deterioration of the structure of mediation which has used the ejido as a shock absorber. To the extent that capitalism can make inroads into the ejidos and the minifundios, to the same measure the stability of the political system will be weakened—which is already happening.

Power Game

The internal dialectic of the power structure supported by Mexican agriculture also merits examination. The mediating structure and the direct power function are two substructures, or opposite poles, that form the unity of the political system. There is a continuous shuffle between these two aspects, and this causes changes in the system so that it follows a dialectical path. Within this dialectical path, contradictions are resolved when the structure of mediation acquires direct power, and the direct power of the bourgeoisie becomes the mediating structure.

To better understand this point, we can explore the example of “caciquismo” so pervasive throughout Mexico. Many of the caciques who control vast regions of rural Mexico originated with la Reforma Agraria, a process that they promoted and from which they acquired their power. When this was not the case, the cacique is able to obtain his position by means of kinship ties, friendship, debts, favours or threats. In its essence, every system of “caciquismo” implies a structure of mediation, whereby the cacique gets his power through the support of the community he represents; but the power that he is given is exercised according to

interests which are alien to this very community. In time, this system breaks down but the cacique has transformed his power into wealth and exerts his control in a despotic and arbitrary manner.

From that moment on, the cacique is no longer useful to the system, and he encounters the opposition of the formal power set-up: the municipal president, with the backing of at least part of the official party members or the local representative of the federal government. There follows a struggle in which the official system gradually builds up a new structure of mediation, since now it is necessary for the community to rid itself of the cacique.

Both poles of the internal contradiction entail their own destruction; the mediating structure, to the extent that it favours economic and political forms that contradict the dynamism of the dominant capitalist system, generates corruption. The exercise of direct power, on the other hand, to the extent that it destroys traditional political and economic forms, causes serious imbalances in a system which is incapable of absorbing, either politically or economically, the forces that are let loose in a process of modernization.

Thus, day by day, the possibilities of a dialectic game within the power structure become more limited, and the end of the whole system gets nearer.

¹ This is due to the work of authors such as Antonio Garcia, Anibal Quijano, Michel Gutelman and Eric Hobsbawm.

² The investigations took place on the Michoacan and Guerrero coast in 1966-67, on the Venezuelan Andes in 1968-69, and in the Valle del Mezquital, Mexico in 1972-73.

³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol III, International Publishers, New York 1967, pp 885.

⁴ V I Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1956, p 12.

⁵ V I Lenin, "Comentario al libro de Kautsky *Die Agrarfrage*", in *Obras Completas* Vol IV, Cartago, Buenos Aires 1969; also "El problema agrario y los criticos de Marx", in *Obras Completas*, Cartago, Buenos Aires 1969.

⁶ Marco Antonio Duran, "Los problemas agrarios Mexicanos", *Revista del Mexico Agrario* 1-2, January-April, 1968, pp 60-61.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See Adolfo Gilly, *La revolucion interrumpida*, El Caballito, Mexico 1971; also Michel Gutelman, *Reforme et mystification agraires en Amerique Latine: Le cas du Mexique*, Maspero, Paris 1971.

⁹ I M de Navarrete's various writings in *Estructura agraria y desarrollo agricola en Mexico*, 3 volumes, Mexico 1971; also Jesus Puente Leyva, "Accumulacion de capital y crecimiento en el sector agropecuario de capital y de Mexico, 1930-67" in *Vientas campesino y desarrollo economico*, Mexico.

¹⁰ Rosa Luxemburg, *La acumulacion del capital*, Grijalbo, Mexico 1967.

¹¹ Samir Amin, *L'accumulation a l'echelle mondiale*, Anthropos, Paris 1970, p 11.

¹² Christian Palloix, "La question de l'echange inegal", in *L'homme et la Societe*, No 18, p 27.

¹³ Antonio Garcia, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

¹⁴ The standard references for the analysis presented above are Kautsky, *La cuestion agraria*, Ruedo Iberico, Paris 1970, ch 5, and Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1968, Part II.

- 15 V I Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1956, pp 172-73.
- 16 Witold Kula, *Theorie economique du systems feudal*, Paris 1970, pp 25-26.
- 17 Sergio Reyes Osorio, "Aspectos de la problematica agraria nacional", *Revista del Mexico Agrario* 5 1968, pp 71-95.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p 92.
- 19 Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, *op. cit.*, p 4.
- 20 Rodolfo Stavenhagen, "Siete tesis equivocadas sobre America Latina", *El Dia*, June 1965.
- 21 Henri Lefebvre, "La teoria marxista-leninista de la renta de la tierra", in *Estudios sociologicos sobre la Reforma Agraria*, UNAM, Mexico 1964.
- 22 Michel Gutelman, *op. cit.*, pp 151.
- 23 V I Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, *op. cit.*, p 186.
- 24 Calderon Martinez, "El mercado internacional de productos agricolas", in *Revista del Mexico Agrario*, 1-2, January-April 1969.
- 25 Undoubtedly, this is the situation that Marx had in mind when he wrote: "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization, they do not form a class." Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, International Publishers, New York 1963, p 124.
- 26 To give a definition of social class which is based upon the whole Mexican socio-economic system as such, i.e. in terms of "relation to the means of production" would lead into a vicious circle.
- 27 "The small peasants are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself". Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *op. cit.*, p 124.
- 28 This term was used by the reactionary Venezuelan historian, Villenila Lanz in 1919, in an effort to justify the dictatorship of Gomez.
- 29 Louis Althusser, *Ideologia y aparatos ideologicos de Estado*, Cuadernos de la Oveja Negra, Medellin, 1971.
- 30 Victor Flores Olea, "Poder, legitimidad y politica en Mexico", *Revista del Mexico Agrario*, 1-2, January-April 1969.
- 31 While leasing is prohibited by article 55 of the constitution, exceptions are granted in article 76 which permits parcelling, leasing, and the use of salaried labour. This is allowed in those cases "where the ejadatorio cannot take on certain tasks profitably, even though he might dedicate his total efforts to them."

SOURIN BHATTACHARYA

India's First Private Irrigation Company

FOR NEARLY a half century after the 1857 Revolt there were massive inflows of private British capital into the Indian economy. Much of it was invested in different kinds of public works, a substantial portion going into railway construction by private joint stock companies under what was known as the guarantee system. The government undertook to pay dividends to the shareholders of the companies at the rate of 5 per cent per annum. Most of the important Indian railways were constructed under the guarantee system in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although its beginnings could be traced back to as early as 1846, it remains true that the progress of the construction work was unsatisfactory till the reign of the first Marquess of Dalhousie. Dalhousie's tenure as chief administrator was marked for its contribution to the development of public utilities. Railways apart, his other important achievement was to establish a posts and telegraphs system.

Other than railways, and posts and telegraphs, a notable construction work of the second half of the last century was in the field of irrigation. The modernization of the irrigation system remained utterly neglected all along. The growing awareness of this need found an articulate expression in the general tenor of the nationalist campaign. During the period under consideration the Indian economy was primarily

agricultural. In 1891, 62 per cent of the total population of the provinces under British rule was directly dependent on agriculture¹. Taking into account the diverse manner of indirect dependence, the percentage of the rural population deriving a livelihood from agriculture was about 90 per cent in the second half of the nineteenth century². Agriculture was primarily dependent on the vagaries of the monsoons. The Meteorological Department at Calcutta used to classify the whole country into 22 rainfall tracts with annual precipitation varying from 9 to 193 inches. The following table gives a detailed picture of rainfall in 1879³.

TABLE I
ANNUAL RAINFALL, 1879

Tracts	Rainfall (in inches)
1 Western Himalayas	65
2 Punjab Plains	22
3 Upper Gangetic Plains, N-W Provinces	38
4 Eastern Himalayas	144
5 Lower Gangetic Plains	68
6 Assam and East Bengal	96
7 Western Bengal	56
8 Central India and Nerbudda	44
9 Rajputana and Gujarat	32
10 Sind and Kutch	9
11 Khandesh and Berar	29
12 Central Province (South)	49
13 North Déccan Plateau	28
14 Hyderabad and South Deccan	25
15 Concan and Ghats	145
16 Malabar and Ghats	112
17 Carnatic	} Madras 34
18 Northern Circars	
19 Arakan	193
20 Pegu	76
21 Tenasserin	173
22 Bay Islands	108

From the above table we find that the average annual rainfall over the whole country was 72 inches. Fourteen tracts were below the national average. Hence rainfall could be taken as inadequate for most of the tracts, underlining the paramount importance of irrigation facilities. Incidentally, it may be noted that tracts 17 and 18 comprised the area through which passed the canal constructed by India's first private irrigation enterprise, the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company. In these regions the annual rainfall was of the order of only 34 to 36 inches.

The conclusions of the Indian Famine Commission of 1901-03 may be noted in this connection:

In the plateau or table-land, lying between the Ghats, the rainfall, which is brought by the south-west monsoon, is the lightest in the Presidency, the average fall in parts of the north-western portion of this area being barely 20 inches. The greater portion of the plateau frequently suffers from unreasonable or deficient rainfall; more especially the Deccan districts, comprising Kurnool, Bellary, Anantapur and Cuddapah and parts of the central districts, comprising North Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore and Trichinopoly.⁴

Kurnool, Bellary and Cuddapah were the three districts included in the works programme of the Madras Company.⁵

Famine Century

In relation to the needs, rainfall was doubtless inadequate. The poor peasants had little or no savings left for the drought years. Famines were inevitable. The nineteenth century witnessed 22 famines in the country. We may construct the following table from the estimates given in the *Imperial Gazetteer*.⁶

TABLE II
FAMINES IN INDIA, 1803—1900

Year	Famine-stricken areas
1803-04	Agra
1806-07	Central Madras
1812-13	Parts of Agra and Madras, Gujarat +
1823-24	Northern Madras
1832-33	Northern Madras
1833-34	Northern Deccan, Gujarat, Trans-Jumna districts and Agra (including Delhi and Hissar) +
1837-38	Central Agra, Trans-Jumna districts (including Delhi and Hissar)
1838-39	Gujarat +
1844-45	The Deccan +
1853-55	Bellary district of Madras
1860-61	Northern Doab of Agra, Delhi and Hissar division of the Punjab
1865-66	Orissa (1867 also) and Bihar, Bellary and Ganjam districts of Madras
1868-70	Ajmer, Trans-Jumna districts, Delhi and Hissar division of the Punjab
1873-74	Bihar
1876-77	Madras and Bombay
1877-78	Madras and Bombay, United Provinces

+ According to official estimates these were only deficit years (no famine conditions).

Year	Famine-stricken areas
1883-84	Hissar and Rohtak districts of the Punjab +
1884-85	Lower Bengal, Bellary and Anantpur districts of Madras +
1888-89	Ganjam districts of Madras
1890-92	Kumayun, Gadwal, Ajmer +
1896-97	Madras (Circars and the Deccan), Bombay Deccan, Bengal, United Provinces, parts of the Delhi division of the Punjab, Central Province, Berar
1899-1900	Bombay, Central Province, Berar, Ajmer, Hissar district of the Punjab

Starvation deaths in these famines took a heavy toll. A rough estimate emerges in the general description given by R C Dutt: "Within the last forty years, within the memory of the present writer, there have been ten famines in India, and, at a moderate computation, the loss of lives from starvation and from diseases brought on by these famines may be estimated at fifteen millions within these forty years."⁷ We get a more accurate estimate of the loss of life given in the *Imperial Gazetteer* for the single year 1838 when a famine occurred in Agra. The mortality figure was put at 15,500,000.⁸ Outside the zone of inadequate rainfall there was an area of at least 10 lakhs square miles where scanty rainfall posed a constant threat of famine. Included in this area was the entire plateau to the south of the Vindhya where the average annual rainfall was 30 inches or less⁹.

Imperialist Motives

It is obvious why irrigation assumed top priority in the economics and politics of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the century when, after the Sepoy Mutiny, the construction of railways was undertaken on a large scale, there were serious misgivings among a section of the nationalist leaders. Not that there was no need for railways, rather it was held that construction of railways was probably indispensable in modernizing the economic structure of the country. The question was whether irrigation ought to have been assigned a greater priority in public expenditure than was envisaged and executed during the period. An important point in the nationalist criticism of the public works policy was that railways could at best help better distribution of available food; but it could not contribute to the production of more food. For the improvement of production itself what was necessary was irrigation. The undue importance attached to the railways in contrast to the utter neglect of irrigation appeared to be a clear manifestation of imperialist motives. Gokhale gave expression to this general dissatisfaction of the Indian mind when he said: "The Indian people feel that this construction is undertaken principally in the interests of the English commercial and moneyed classes, and that it assists in the further exploitation of our resources."¹⁰

In this short comment Gokhale pinpointed the imperialist character of railway construction. It is not our concern at the moment to judge whether this characterization was valid. What we are interested in at present is to show that there was a clear economic argument in favour of irrigation and a sufficiently clear political expression of this economic need. The Indian nationalist thinking was explicit that from the point of view of Indian economic progress, irrigation was far more desirable than railways.

There was no reason why the construction of railways and the provision of irrigation facilities should have assumed a competitive, rather than complementary character. But in the framework of the mid-nineteenth century economic structure under a foreign rule their roles were clearly competitive. The basic reason for this was the limitation of the financial resources of the state. One can form an idea of the extent to which irrigation facilities were relegated to second place: upto 1905 the total expenditure on railways was Rs 359 crores, while that on irrigation upto 1902-03 was only Rs 43 crores.¹¹ The nationalist leaders were naturally critical of this step-motherly attitude of the government towards irrigation. This was voiced probably in the strongest terms in the writings of R C Dutt. "When we turn from railways to the subject of irrigation works," he said, "we turn from unwise extravagance to equally unwise niggardliness."¹²

Nationalist Rationale

R M Sayani, a member of the Viceroy's Council, raised this question at a meeting of the Council and maintained that "while railways far absorb so large a measure of government attention, irrigation canals, which are more protective against famine, are allowed only three quarters of a crore of rupees, or about one-thirteenth of the amount spent on railways each year."¹³ Besides, leaders like D E Wacha, G S Iyer and the nationalist papers like *Mahratta* and *Kaiser-i-Hind* were also emphatic in their plea for irrigation.

What were the chief arguments of the nationalist leaders and the Indian public opinion (at least that section of it which found expression in the nationalist press) in favour of the construction of irrigation works? Their main point was, as has been mentioned before, that the development of railways could at best improve the distribution but could not certainly increase food production: as a result of better irrigation the total agricultural output was likely to go up significantly. Apart from this rather easily comprehensible argument they had a few more points which deserve our close attention. The first of these was about the profitability of the irrigation projects. It was held that while the railways were experiencing regular losses the prospect for irrigation projects were much better.¹⁴ It was felt that a profit rate of 6 to 9 per cent could easily be expected of the irrigation works. A section of the irrigation enthusiasts was interested because they thought that the irrigation canals could also be utilized for water transportation.¹⁵ The second point of this

school was still subtler. The entire stores for the construction of the railways were purchased from England, and hence, a large part of the benefit from these new investments flowed out of the country. The favourable impact of the railway investments on employment was felt in England rather than in India. Therefore, from the point of view of the domestic economy it was held that investments in irrigation were likely to be much more beneficial.

The profitability and the employment argument in favour of the irrigation projects deserve close scrutiny. That the railway companies were incurring losses year after year was well known. The 5 per cent dividend that the Government of India was obliged under the terms of the contract to pay to the companies used to be financed from the general resources of the government, which were made up of taxes imposed upon the Indian people. It was thus not unexpected that the Indian public opinion, the nationalist leaders and the press would be opposed to any further expansion of the railways. But it is interesting to note whether the situation was any better for irrigation, on which the nationalists laid all their emphasis as the alternative avenue for investment. At least a study of the history of early irrigation projects constructed under private enterprise strongly suggest the similarities in performance with the railway projects.

Profit and Loss

It was, of course, true that in terms of profitability the public irrigation works yielded substantial profit and they were according to this criterion successful projects. Michael Edwardes writes thus about the public irrigation projects, which were constructed during the days of the East India Company: "All the Company's irrigation works were financially profitable. Water dues and, in some cases, increase in the revenue assessments, adequately covered costs".¹⁶ It is most interesting to note that though the public irrigation works were financially profitable propositions, the East India Company was extremely reluctant to further expand these works as government enterprises. Edwardes continues: "Nevertheless the Company's attitude remained parsimonious and—even though, after the first major works on the western and eastern Jumna canals, it became clear that there was a strong probability of substantial returns—the Directors authorized expenditure only with reluctance and, generally speaking, under the strongest pressure from administrators in India." The *Imperial Gazetteer* also came to the same conclusion: "Although the earliest results attained by direct government agency on the Cauvery, Godavari and Jumna works were sufficiently encouraging, the East India Company was reluctant to commit itself to any extensive scheme of state irrigation works."¹⁷

The public works in irrigation were found to be profitable, but the government was reluctant to expand these works further. The nationalist pressure, on the other hand, was there to provide for greater irrigation

facilities. Probably, partly as a response to this the government took some steps after 1857 to construct irrigation works, but they were to be undertaken chiefly with private capital. We shall consider in detail at a later stage how far private construction of irrigation works failed to measure up to financial viability. The first of these private initiatives was the Toombhudra (Tungabhadra) Project undertaken by the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company with a 5 per cent government guarantee on the capital invested. Within only 9 years (1857-66) the company faced such acute financial problems that it could not carry on even with regular borrowing and ultimately it had to be taken over by the government in 1882 and since then the Tungabhadra Project was absorbed into the public 'sector.'

Apart from the question of profitability another argument put forward by the nationalists was that investments in irrigation would mean that most of the resources circulate in the domestic economy and thus help increase the national income of the country and lead to an expansion of employment opportunities. We would later on see in connexion with the analysis of the Tungabhadra Project of the Madras Company¹⁸ that even this expectation was not fulfilled. As a piece of theoretical argument the nationalist thinking was perfectly tenable and even though it originated in a framework of pre-Keynesian ideas, it correctly comprehended the relations between investment, national income and employment. From this standpoint the criticism against the construction of railways did also stand to reason. But the multitude of forces operative in the world of reality often tends to falsify theoretical expectations. The investments in the Madras Company generated an insignificant volume of employment. In fact one can reasonably entertain serious doubts that one of the main reasons of the total failure of the Tungabhadra Project was an acute shortage of labour. This point will be discussed later.

Nineteenth-century Irrigation

During the whole of the second half of the nineteenth century the subject of irrigation works was as neglected as it was debated. The beginnings of modern irrigation works could, of course, be traced back to the first half of the century. One of the biggest irrigation works of the British regime was a project in the Cauvery delta where there was a dam which was originally constructed about 1500 years ago.¹⁹ But it was the English public works engineer Sir Arthur Cotton who reconstructed it. The modernization scheme was completed under the direction of Sir Arthur in 1835-36. Inspired with the success of this big project, Cotton took up later the work of the Godavari Project. Besides, there was the Jumna Canal in northern India. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a canal had been constructed along the east coast of the river Jumna which could carry water straight down to Saharanpur.²⁰ This canal had remained unusable and deserted for a long time. Then, under British administration, it was rebuilt to carry the Jumna waters to far-flung farms and fields.

This was only the beginning. A few facts are presented here to give a general picture of nineteenth-century irrigation. Land under irrigation over the entire British territory measured 44,000,000 acres. Of this area irrigation from wells covered 13,000,000 acres and from tanks 8,000,000 acres, the percentages being respectively 30²¹ and 18.²² In addition, there were canals constructed under public and private enterprises. The large canals were mostly built by the government. Private initiative was not negligible. The area under irrigation from private construction was 1,000,000 acres in the Punjab, 750,000 acres in the United Provinces, 5,000,000 acres in Bengal and 336,000 acres in Madras. There were also many small works. It is very difficult to form a reasonably accurate estimate of the acreage under irrigation from these sources for lack of uniformity of definitions in the accounts maintained for different provinces. For instance, what was included under the heading 'canals' in some provinces was entered under 'tanks' elsewhere and in Bengal and the United Provinces these were being simply shown as 'other sources'. However, there is reason to believe that taking all-India estimates of irrigation from sundry private sources into account, the annual figure comes to about 8,000,000 acres, that is, about 16 to 18 per cent²³ of the total. Besides all these, there were the large canal systems classified as perennial and inundation. The difference was that in the perennial canals arrangements were made for water storage throughout the year: in the inundation canals, irrigation could be provided only direct from the rivers.

There were at least two other categories of irrigation works. One of these was based upon the objectives of the works concerned. Works which were constructed for direct financial profit were called productive and those for which the main purpose was to protect crops and stave off famines were called protective. The other classification was based upon the mode of keeping accounts. There was a class of works for which capital account and revenue account were kept separately, while for the rest only the revenue account was kept. This latter kind was usually financed from the Famine Insurance Grant. For most of the productive works capital and revenue accounts were kept separately. The 'major works' mentioned in the various reports and documents of the government belonged to this category.

Drought-prone Madras Presidency

In urgency for irrigation the position of Madras was next only to Sind and the Punjab. We have already seen that the average annual rainfall over most of the tracts in the Madras Presidency was around 30 inches. In fact with the exception of Malabar coast in the west most of the Presidency suffered from inadequate and irregular rainfall.²⁴ The bulk of rice production was in wet lands, that is, lands where it was technically feasible (and probably natural also) to provide irrigation. We get from the estimates of the Famine Commissioner in 1878 that the area of wet land in the Madras Presidency was 5½ million acres, 17 per cent of

the total area—32 million acres—under cultivation.²⁵ Out of the $5\frac{1}{8}$ million acres of wet land the government earned a total revenue of £ 2 million in 1878.²⁶ Of the $5\frac{1}{8}$ million, 1,680,178 acres (which accounted for a revenue of £ 739,778) were provided with irrigation from seven large projects. Capital and revenue accounts for all seven projects were kept separately, all being classified productive. These were: Godavari Delta System, Kistna Delta System, Pennar River Canals, Sangam River Canals (under construction in 1882-83), Kurnool Canal (purchased from the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company in 1882), Cauvery Delta System and Srivaikuntam Anicut (dam) System.²⁷ In addition, there were many other smaller projects irrigating large tracts and yielding substantial profits. Upto 1902-03 the total investment in the larger projects was Rs 747 lakhs and on the smaller ones Rs 105 lakhs; the total area under irrigation from the larger projects was 2,940,953 acres and from the smaller projects 584,081 acres; net income from the larger projects was 8.7 per cent of the capital invested and that from the smaller projects was 7 per cent. A project-wise breakdown (excluding the Sangam system) is given in the following table.

TABLE III

PROFITABILITY OF PROJECTS

Project	Total capital invested upto 1902-03 (Rs lakhs)	Area under irrigation upto 1902-03 (Acres)	Net income as percentage of capital invest- ment
Godavari Delta System	1,34	810,634	18.4
Kistna Delta System	1,44	627,850	15.8
Pennar River Canals	63	163,641	5.0
Cauvery Delta System	31	982,356	28.5
Srivaikuntam Anicut System	15	44,526	6.1
Kurnool-Cuddapah Canal	2,17	60,154	0.5

SOURCE: *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol III, Oxford 1908, pp 331-332.

Of the six major irrigation works only the Kurnool-Cuddapah Canal was constructed on private initiative. While the other projects of the Madras Presidency were yielding considerable profit—upto 28.5 per cent—the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal in 1902-03 was paying a low return at 0.5 per cent. The government had purchased this canal from the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company in 1882. Even under government control the profitability of the project remained as poor as ever.

It has been mentioned before that even though the major works were profitable enough, the government was not enthusiastic about expanding irrigation facilities on its own initiative. Like the railways, the

construction of the irrigation works was sought to be made under private enterprise, entirely British. The financial experience of the railways around 1857 was not so encouraging, and for private investors, a guaranteed dividend of 5 per cent from the government was certainly a tempting proposition. Had profit as such been the only consideration, the British capitalists could reasonably expect a high rate of returns in the home country. Statistics are scanty, but the estimates of Phelps Brown and Bernard Weber²⁸ put the UK rate of profit during 1870-1913 at 10 to 11 per cent. There was a fall of this rate afterwards but even then it did not go below 7 per cent. Hence a simple 5 per cent return in India would not have been so attractive to the British capitalists: a gilt-edged 5 per cent was however preferred to a 7 or even 10 per cent packed with risk and uncertainty.

Madras Company

In 1857 the Court of Directors of the East India Company invited proposals for private construction of irrigation works in Madras.²⁹ The first private irrigation company of India—The Madras Irrigation and Canal Company—was formed in response to this invitation. The early history of this company would reveal that the first phase of its formation was not altogether smooth. There were traces of conflict operating at different levels. The purposes and objectives of the East India Company, the local government of the Madras Presidency and English capital were not all in harmony. We know from the signed statement of John Westwood, secretary of the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company, delivered at the first general meeting of shareholders held in London Tavern, Bishopsgate on 27 October 1859 that in response to the invitation of the East India Company the directors of the Madras Company sent in the beginning of February 1857, a detailed description of its objectives and proposed programmes of work along with a demand for a 5 per cent guarantee to the Court of Directors and the Board of Control of the East India Company. The proposed objectives and the works programme detailed in this petition were as follows:

1 To construct, protect and administer the irrigation works for the Madras Presidency as well as for Hyderabad, Mysore, Nagpur, Orissa, Southern Mahratta and Travancore covering a total area of 500,000 square miles (the finest cotton area of the Deccan being included in this). In addition, if possible, to construct navigable canals for water transportation, feeder canals, tramlines and the like, ancillary to construction works.

2 To collect tolls on tramlines and canals.

3 To carry goods and passenger traffic on canals and tramlines.

4 To supply water for the manufacturing industries.³⁰

The directors of the company made it clear along with these proposals that they would seek the permission of the government for every different phase of their project and that actual work would start only

after obtaining necessary permission. Even after this clear expression of reliance on governmental sanction, friction arose on the question of a 5 per cent guarantee. The government rejected the demand for a guarantee although it found itself agreeable to the proposed aims, objectives and programmes of work. As Westood observed: "The great importance and high value of undertaking were unhesitatingly acknowledged by those authorities, and a promise of every assistance and encouragement necessary for its development was given by them, short, however, of the required guarantee, which they declined to accord."⁸¹

Fight for Guarantee

The directors of the Madras Company in their letter of 6 June 1857 to the Court of Directors of the East India Company once again raised the demand for guarantee. They also made clear the difficulties of working without a guarantee. Along with this were presented the details of two specific projects chosen from among their proposals for approval of the Court of Directors. Later on (in July and November 1858) the detailed descriptions of two other projects were placed for approval. Many other letters were exchanged between the Madras Company and the East India Company between June and September of 1857. As a result, the directors of the East India Company forwarded, in September 1857, all the relevant papers of the Madras Company including the original proposals, to the Government of India and the Government of Madras for their perusal. The responsibility of a final decision also was laid upon them. According to the instructions of the Court of Directors the responsibility of the two governments was not only limited to the proposals of the Madras Company, but the whole question of construction of irrigation works under private enterprise was made the concern of both the governments. Whether a guarantee was at all to be sanctioned, if sanctioned at what rate, whether or not any other form of government assistance would be needed and could be provided—all these issues would be finally decided upon by the governments in India. Instructions were issued to the officers of the revenue and public works departments of the districts which would come under the proposed Tungabhadra Project to visit their respective areas and submit reports on the relevance and other related aspects of the construction of irrigation works.

The directors of the company were, of course, not idly waiting for the local surveys and reports. In the meantime they established contact with the governmental authorities in Britain. They drafted a Bill for enactment by Parliament. With the support of the Treasury benches, the Bill was accepted in both Houses and received the assent of the Queen on 11 May 1858. It was only then that the company was formally empowered to start the actual construction work, although the terms and conditions were yet to be finally settled.

Shortly after the Bill was accepted in Parliament, the Madras government in one of their reports opposed the idea of vesting the

construction of irrigation works in the hands of private companies. While emphasizing adequately the necessity and importance of irrigation works, it endorsed the different aspects of all the works proposed by the Madras Company. The company in fact proposed that out of the various projects outlined in their original proposal, one should be chosen as a starting point: the Tungabhadra Project. A canal was to be constructed first, taking its course from the southern bank of the Tungabhadra river into the fertile lands in Bellary, Kurnool, Cuddapah and Nellore to be finally united with another canal on the eastern side, which would receive its water supply from the Tungabhadra and Pennar rivers. The second part of the project was another canal on the Tungabhadra at a point exactly on the opposite side of the source of the first canal. It was to take its course through the Raichur Doab in between the Kistna and the Tungabhadra

Profit Motive the Spur

The Madras government agreed, recognizing the enormous possibilities of profit from the proposed projects. In fact profitability prospect seemed so bright that the government was not disposed to leave the construction work to the responsibility of any private company. The government wrote in its report: "Further we question whether considering that the returns from irrigation works are always considerable and often immense, the assistance of a third party is really needed. Nor do we consider it advisable to sacrifice any portion of the profits of great irrigation works."³

Along with this the Madras government made it absolutely clear that it was opposed to the policy of guaranteeing the investments of private companies. It is important to note that the opinion of the Madras government, reflected in their report, was not entirely formed on the advice of the bureaucracy. The final responsibility of considering the proposals of the Madras Company devolved on those who were engineers and revenue officers with long experience and involved acquaintance with local conditions. None of these officers had doubts about the profitability of constructing irrigation works in the proposed region.

As soon as the directors came to know of the government's reservations on the question of guarantee, they promptly started negotiating with the authorities in England. In December 1958 a contract was made with the then Secretary of State, Lord Stanley. The terms of this contract were as follows:

- 1 In the first phase the work of the company would be confined only to one project. The selection of the project for this purpose would be subject to the approval of the local government and the ceiling of total expenditure would be fixed at £ 1,000,000.

- 2 The Secretary of State would be obliged to pay interest at the rate of 5 per cent per annum on the capital of £ 1,000,000.

- 3 The right to purchase the irrigation works constructed by the company within six months at the end of any period of twenty-five years

after the completion of this contract was reserved by the Secretary of State in Council or the Government of India. The purchase price would be fixed at the average of the market price of the company shares for the last three years in the London stock exchange.

4 Every phase of the construction of the company would be subject to the approval of the local government.

5 The right to purchase the water for irrigation was reserved by the government. The purchase price of this water was to be jointly negotiated between the company and the government.

6 The income of the company net of deduction for all expenses would be equally shared by the company and the government.

7 The government would grant free land to the company for its construction.

8 The Secretary of State in Council would enjoy such supervisory powers over the company in regard to the construction as well as to its expenses and the keeping of accounts as he used to enjoy in relation to the private railway companies.

Railway Parallels

The history of the first phase of the construction of railways in India was also more or less similar. When Macdonald Stephenson, the founder of the East India Railway Company, first placed his proposal for the construction of railways in 1846 to the Government of Bengal, there developed a similar tripartite tension between the directors of the rail company, the Court of Directors and the Board of Control of the East India Company. The main bone of contention there also was the terms of the contract—especially the question of guarantee. The Court of Directors proposed that the government would be prepared to guarantee an income of 4 per cent per annum on a capital of £5 million if the company was ready to accept certain other conditions and if it could restrict its cost of construction to £ 15,000 per mile. The most important point among the other conditions was that the profit would be shared on a fifty-fifty basis between the company and the government. Although the Board of Control accepted in principle the policy of constructing railways through the private companies, it was opposed to the policy of guaranteeing so high a capital investment. The Board of Control was at the most prepared to extend its guarantee for a maximum period of 15 years, provided that the Court of Directors was of the opinion that such amount of capital would in no case be raised through alternative means. The directors of the rail company were not satisfied with this concession.³⁸ However, without going much into railway history, it can safely be maintained that though in their early stages both the railway and the irrigation companies had to go through similar strains, the capitalists of these private companies ultimately had the contracts signed in their favour in both cases. But was it really impossible to raise the necessary capital without the provision of guarantee? Let us quote from the evidence of William Thornton deposed

before the parliamentary Committee of 1871:

I do believe that unguaranteed capital would have gone into India for the construction of railways, had it not been for the guarantee. Considering how this country is always growing in wealth, and what an immense amount of capital is seeking investment which it cannot find in England, and goes to South America and other countries abroad, I cannot conceive that it would persistently have neglected India.⁸⁴

An eminent expert on railway affairs like Sir William Ackworth was also of the opinion that instead of providing outright guarantee it would be more beneficial to the nation were the government to participate in the share capital of the company.⁸⁵

Contract Terms

The main items included in the contracts between the government and the private railway companies are given below:

1 The right to determine the alignment of the railway or, if necessary, to change its course was reserved by the government.

2 The government would lease out land free of cost to the companies for a period of 99 years.

3 The companies would have to secure the approval of the government in writing for each construction work.

4 The responsibility of final decisions regarding the number of trains that would run on particular lines or the permissible speed limits of those trains and the freight rates on them remained with the government. If found necessary, the government could also alter these arrangements.

5 The government would be entitled to exercise final authority on the expenses and their supervision.

6 All expenditures to be made by the company on capital accounts would be subject to the approval of the government.

7 The government would remain obliged to make an income of 5 per cent per annum certain for the companies on the capital invested by them for a period of 99 years.

8 At the end of the period of 99 years the land on which railroads would be constructed and the constructions themselves would all be the property of the government. The rolling stock of the companies would be purchased by the government at a just price.

9 After the completion of construction work the companies could surrender the railways to the government at six month's notice. The government would then pay the companies the whole of their expenditure on capital accounts.

10 At its own discretion the government could purchase the construction of the companies at the end of the first twentyfive or fifty years. The purchase price would be settled at the average of the London price of shares of the companies for the last three years.

The first thing that strikes one in a comparative study of the

conditions agreed upon for the railway companies and those for the irrigation companies is that they both had a common model. And the main point in this model was that the government wanted to exercise supervisory powers over the work and expenditure of the private companies. It was only natural to wish to exercise such powers. Because the importance of railway or irrigation work for the socio-economic life of the nation was of such order these works could not be simply left to the vagaries of private enterprise. Since public utilities touch varied aspects of a nation's life, no responsible government can remain entirely indifferent to them. The modern concept of a mixed economy did not, to be sure, take a concrete shape at that time, yet one can trace its rudiments in these policies. It is, of course, interesting to note that even though there were close similarities in the two models and sometimes also in points of details, a basic difference in the attitude of the government towards the railway companies can also be clearly discerned in these contracts.

Different Criteria for Irrigation

The official indifference towards irrigation has already been discussed in general terms. In that perspective it seems significant that for the irrigation companies the governmental steps were much more hesitant. The extent to which the irrigation companies were likely to be profitable by financial standards alone has already been pointed out with reference to some concrete instances. Some further instances from the opinions of experts in the field will also be cited later on. In spite of this prospect of profitability: the government introduced these two clear clauses: that only one work could be taken up in the beginning and the expenditure to be incurred on the first project must be kept within the ceiling of £ 1,000,000. This appears to be in the nature of a 'pilot scheme', to use a current terminology. It is to be noted that in the case of the railway companies there was no such fixed ceiling of expenditure. For the railways the government was simply ready to guarantee a 5 per cent income per annum on the total investments of the companies whereas for irrigation works it had to be persuaded through hard bargain to pay dividend only on a sum of £ 1,000,000.

It has already been mentioned that the Madras Company had selected the Tungabhadra Project as their first construction. That this selection was not unwise would also be borne out by the report of Cotton, who was the ablest irrigation engineer at that time. Immediately after the Bill allowing the company to be established had been accepted in Parliament, the Madras government on instructions from the Secretary of State had started their investigations relating to the first project. The Secretary of State had requested the Madras government to select a project with minimum technical problems and maximum direct profit on a capital investment of £1 million.⁹⁶ To give effect to this request the Madras government immediately asked Colonel Cotton to take

up the responsibility of investigations. In his report Cotton expressed his unreserved support in favour of the Tungabhadra Project. He submitted a detailed list of the considerations which should generally guide the selection of irrigation works⁹⁷. Some of the important criteria proposed by Cotton are briefly stated below:

- 1 The shareholders of the company must have a good prospect of earning a reasonable profit. This will be important for the import of British capital into India.

- 2 The irrigation works must contribute to the welfare of the peoples in the related areas.

- 3 The government must have both direct and indirect prospects of gain.

- 4 The works must be so constructed that the areas which are directly linked to ports may get enough water to raise their food production and that the production of exportable products may also be easier. This will also be helpful to purchase foreign goods.

- 5 As a result of the irrigation works the Europeans would find ample opportunity to spread in many parts of the land and this will be beneficial for the local population also.

- 6 Each irrigation work should be so planned that the different parts of it may be constructed as separate self-contained projects. As a result the invested capital may yield early income.

- 7 The irrigation works should be localized in those areas which are prone to famines.

Selection of Tungabhadra

The imperialist character of the criteria proposed by Cotton was very clear. This imperialist frame of reference was probably operative also in regard to the railway companies, though it was not made so articulate in any report at that time.

Cotton's purpose was to apply these criteria to select one of the two proposed projects. Of these, one was the Tungabhadra and the other was the Coimbatore Project. The latter was a plan to construct large tanks in the Nilgiris from where to irrigate the whole of the Coimbatore region and parts of Malabar. It was also aimed at supplying additional water to the Cauvery to make the irrigation system of Trichinopoly and Tanjore more effective and to establish water communication between the canals on the eastern and western banks.

According to Cotton both the Tungabhadra and the Coimbatore deserved to be selected on the basis of the criteria suggested. Of the two, Cotton's inclination was to take up the Tungabhadra as the first project. In support of this first selection he had a nine-fold argument. The reasons in a summary form are given below:

- 1 Of the two projects the Tungabhadra was likely to be more profitable, because on the successful completion of this project it would be possible to utilize for productive purposes the considerable amount of

water that used to be wasted for about seven months in a year.

2. The Tungabhadra Project would benefit a section of the population which was traditionally famine-stricken and deprived of the nearness to any port.

3. This was the better project from the point of view of its effect on the government exchequer because it would serve to bring a large section of the population within the scope of export-import trade leading to a greater volume of revenue collection from the area.

4. Since the rivers of this region like the Kistna flow along the plains (the slope being about only $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in a mile), it will be possible to establish a river communication system at a very low cost if the Kistna below Kurnool could be linked to the canal on the eastern coast. Very easy communication would be established between the upper basin of the Kistna and the port. This is also pregnant with political implications.

5. Different phases of this project can be constructed as separate projects and there is also a wide scope for earning quick profit from the completion of the partial projects.

6. If the Kistna below Kurnool could be connected to the canal on the eastern coast, we would get a two-hundred-mile-long navigable riverway that would in its turn connect a two-thousand-mile riverway to the Presidency town.

Prospects for British Immigrants

Apart from these important economic and geographic reasons there were also some political reasons indicated in Cotton's report. After considering all these details Cotton's conclusion was: "I think we have ample proof that this project is the best of the two proposed to begin with, and that nothing in this Presidency can be proposed equal to it, in all the main desiderata."³⁸ According to him these works would require a capital of not more than one million pounds. All these phases of the work were on the eastern coast of the Tungabhadra. Cotton made a strong plea that it would also be desirable to spend another one million pounds to make similar construction simultaneously on the western coast so that a vast expanse between Ahmednagar and Mangalore could be brought within a network of water communication.

Cotton's report was prepared not simply from the point of view of an irrigation expert. The advantages and disadvantages pertaining to English infiltration into this country occupied a great part of his mind. This is clearly indicated in those portions of the report where he was advancing, as one of the important arguments in favour of the Tungabhadra Project, the fact that the related areas were on climatic considerations very conducive to the habitation of the Englishman; and still more clearly, in the portions where he discussed the commercial possibilities of the Tungabhadra Project. When Cotton was writing his report on the Tungabhadra he had naturally in the back of his mind as model the work on the Godavari which triggered off the commercial expansion of the related region

of Rajahmundry. Before the construction of the Godavari Project the average export of the Rajahmundry region amounted to six lakhs rupees annually. After completion the amount of export trade rose to an annual figure of forty lakhs rupees.³⁹ The area on which this trade originated was 2400 square miles. The region which was to boost exports as a result of the proposed Tungabhadra Project covered 150,000 square miles. According to Cotton's estimates the value of commerce from this vast region would be at least £5 million.⁴⁰

TABLE IV ⁴¹

EXPECTED EXPENDITURE ON THE TUNGABHADRA PROJECT: COTTON'S
ESTIMATE

Construction	Expected Expenditure (Rs lakhs)
Anicut on the Tungabhadra (below Kurnool)	2
20-mile-long canal from the anicut (@ Rs 15,000 per mile)	3
Irrigation on 350,000 acres of land (@ Rs 10 per acre)	25
Anicut on the Tungabhadra (near the Huggry confluence)	1
Anicut on the Tungabhadra (near Hussur)	2
120-mile-long dam below Kurnool (@ Rs 15,000 per mile)	18
Construction on the hills along the canal	5
1000-feet lockage (@ Rs 1000 per foot)	10
Distribution of water on 250,000 acres of land (@ Rs 4 per acre)	10
Aqueduct above Huggry	3
100-mile-long canal for water- transportation and irrigation	15
Development of Pennar towards the Eastern Ghats	12
50-mile-long canal from the Ghats to the canals on the eastern coast (@ Rs 10,000 per mile)	5
800-foot lockage (@ Rs 1000 per foot)	8
Storage of 2,000-million-cubic yard of water (@ Rs 500 per million cubic yard)	10
Kistna dam and canal	6
Tungabhadra dam	20
Others	7
Total	162 ⁴²

On the basis of his detailed investigation Cotton could also present the quantitative aspects of the Tungabhadra Project. His estimates of expected expenditure necessary for different phases of the project are given in table IV. Cotton made an estimate of the expected income from this project as shown in table V.

TABLE V ⁴³

EXPECTED INCOME FROM THE TUNGABHADRA PROJECT

Item	Expected Income (Rs lakhs)
Water rate on 500,000 acres of land (@ Rs 5 per acre)	25
Sale of water of about 100,000 acres of land in Bellary, Kurnool, Cuddapah and Nellore (@ Rs 2 per acre)	2
Toll from water transportation for 1000 miles (@ 1 paisa per ton-mile)	10
Total	37
Rate of return	27%
Less maintenance cost	5%
Rate of net return	22%

One gets the 27 per cent return rate if the total expenditure is taken to be Rs 136 lakhs. If it is taken to be Rs 162 lakhs then the figure of net return turns out to be 23 per cent. Deducting 5 per cent for maintenance costs it works out at 18 per cent. But Cotton anticipated that it would be possible to get water rates on an area of not 500,000 but 2,000,000 acres. In case this anticipation was realized, the figure of total income would rise to Rs 112 lakhs. The rates of gross and net return then would respectively become 67 and 62 per cent.

Irrigation Company Afloat

After the support of the Madras government had been made clear the directors of the company started selling their shares in December 1858. The English capitalists were enthusiastic enough for this company. 50,000 shares for a total capital of one million pounds were quickly sold and one pound for each share raised immediately. In February 1859 the company was allowed to raise the outstanding sum of £19 per share. There was also a very favourable response for the second call of the company. At the time of actual construction the total paid-up capital amounted to £ 389,695.⁴⁴ As far as the directors were concerned this first response appeared to be very hopeful. The directors felt that "this unprecedented financial success, indicative as it is of the confidence of the proprietary in the undertaking, has rendered it unnecessary to make any further call upon the shareholders at present".⁴⁵

The initial phase of the company thus started on a hopeful note amidst rosy expectations. To undertake the technical responsibility of construction the company appointed as Chief Engineer, Colonel Hugh Calvely Cotton who was certainly the ablest irrigation engineer in his time and who had already been well acquainted with the Tungabhadra Project in the course of his preliminary survey.

¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol III, Oxford 1908, p 1.

² *Ibid.*, p 2.

³ *Report of the Select Committee on Indian Public Works*, 1879.

⁴ *Report of the Indian Irrigation Commission, 1901-03*, Vol II, Chapter XVI, p 89,

⁵ Robert B Buckley, *The Irrigation Works of India and Their Financial Results*, W H Allen & Co., London 1880, Chapter II.

⁶ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *op. cit.*, p 501.

⁷ R C Dutt, *Famines in India*, pp 13-16.

⁸ *Imperial Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p 485. This is also taken to be an underestimate. It is rather difficult to get dependable estimates of mortality from famines. But intensive research may lead to some acceptable figures. Some of the facts are fairly easily available. For example, the mortality rate from the 1861 famine of Agra-Delhi was about 8.5 per cent of the total population of the region. In 1876-78 the total number of deaths in Bombay, Madras, Mysore and Hyderabad was 6.1 million. During 1860-79 the mortality figure was 11 million. See in this connection B M Bhatia, *Famines in India 1860-1965*; K Davis, *The Population of India and Pakistan*; A Loveday, *The History and Economics of Indian Famines and Census of India*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 6.

¹⁰ Quoted in Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, Peoples' Publishing House, New Delhi 1966, p 171.

¹¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *op. cit.*, pp 332, 375-76.

¹² R C Dutt, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, p 550.

¹³ *Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India*, assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations (Annual), 1898, Vol XXXVII, p 534.

¹⁴ In fact the railways did not yield any profit till the beginning of the twentieth century.

¹⁵ Ranade, Parliamentary Committee on Public Works, JPSS, July 1881, pp 16, 25, 27.

¹⁶ Michael Edwardes, *British India, 1772-1947*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London 1967 p 93.

¹⁷ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *op. cit.*, p 328.

¹⁸ Henceforward for the sake of convenience of reference we shall refer to the Madras Irrigation and Canal Company as simply the Madras Company.

¹⁹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, *op. cit.*, p 327.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p 318.

²² *Ibid.*, p 325.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp 325-26.

²⁴ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Second Edition, Vol VI London 1886, pp 535-537.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, taking account of irrigation from private projects also the total irrigated area comes to 7 million acres.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.* There are some differences between the lists given in the 1886 and 1908 editions of the *Imperial Gazetteer*. In the 1908 edition there is no mention of the Sangam river canals. Three other projects are listed as major works—Barur Tank, Periyar Project and Rushikulya Project. In comparison with the other major works all these three were smaller. The total investments in these projects upto 1902-03 were: Barur - Rs 4 lakhs, Periyar - Rs 90 lakhs and Rushikulya - Rs 49 lakhs.

NOTE

Indigo Planters, Ram Mohan Roy and the 1833 Charter Act

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the Charter Act of 1833 for indigo plantation in India is so immense that it is hardly possible to overlook it. Today it is no longer disputed that this Act far from benefiting, did serious, perhaps irreparable harm to Indian society and economy. But there has been an intense debate in recent times about Ram Mohan Roy's plea for the European indigo planters immediately before the renewal of the charter of the East India Company. This note is an attempt at analyzing the significance of the Charter Act of 1833 and assessing Ram Mohan's views about the planters.

The history of economic theory and policy of the British government since the Industrial Revolution, as E J Hobsbawm has put it, is essentially that of the rise and fall the *laissez faire*.¹ *Laissez faire*, or more specifically Free Trade, was very much in the air in England during the four decades preceding the Charter Act of 1833. At about the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain found her position sound and secure. Nearly the entire underdeveloped world was her colony and "would remain so if, under Free Trade, they [the underdeveloped countries] bought in the cheapest market and sold in the dearest, which meant they bought and sold in the only big market there was—Britain."²

From the 1780s onwards, or more precisely, since the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Free Trade became a subject of hot discussion. There was a struggle between the older vested interests and the new bourgeois industrialists. The liberals and the utilitarians whose influence was considerable about this time, were opposed to any kind of control of trade and commerce. The new bourgeois industrialists who were supported by the liberals and the utilitarians, considered the question of Free Trade absolutely vital and over this question they were ready to fight tooth and nail.³ The triumph of this new industrialist class was evidenced in the Reform Act of 1832. Another case of their triumph definitely was the Charter Act of 1833, for Free Trade, as opposed to mercantilist monopoly, was one of the most important gains of that class in the Charter Act of 1833.

There was a powerful movement in India in the 1820s for Free

Trade and 'colonization. The word 'colonization' needs to be explained. For about a decade before the renewal of the charter in 1833, there was a growing demand among the European indigo planters for some kind of law that would allow them unrestricted residence in India.⁴ This movement came soon to be known as the colonization movement. Simultaneously an influential section of the Bengalees also started a serious movement for colonization of Europeans in India in which Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore figured most prominently. A brief survey of this movement during the five years preceding the renewal of the charter in 1833 would lay bare the conditions under which Free Trade and colonization were conceded.

In February 1828, the *Sambad Kaumudi*, one of the earliest Bengali journals, brought out a news item that in violation of the existing laws the planters were seizing paddy fields for planting indigo. Consequently, there was a sharp fall in the production of rice, the staple food of the people.⁵ Dwarkanath Tagore raised this point with great vehemence in a letter to the editor of the *Sambad Kaumudi* on 26 February 1828. He claimed that everyone who had an estate of his own—and Dwarkanath, to be sure, had quite a few—knew "to what degree wastelands have been cultivated in consequence of indigo plantation and how comfortably the lower classes are spending their days from the dispersion of money throughout the country by the indigo planters." It therefore, he went on, could be justly inferred that the unrestricted residence of European gentlemen should be permitted. Towards the end of his letter he even went so far as to say that whoever was opposed to this was an enemy of the natives.⁶ Dwarkanath followed this up with yet another piece in the columns of the *Bengal Hurkaru*. Here, of course, he offered no new arguments but merely reiterated those he had already put forward in the *Sambad Kaumudi*.

In Aid of European Settlers

The Europeans, mainly the planters, met in June 1828 and again in May 1829 demanding Free Trade and unrestricted settlement in India. This was reported in the third issue of the Bengali weekly *Bangadut* which came out on 30 May 1829.⁷ Mention must now be made about the agency houses of Bengal. These agency houses controlled the country trade in large measure and financed indigo manufacture. Among other things "trade with Europe in indigo became their preserve."⁸ These agency houses depended a great deal on the savings of the company's servants. They lent the planters enough money at an interest of about 10 per cent. These agency houses sometimes secured money from the government as well. In fact the debt policy of the government in 1823 helped them to borrow and invest in indigo cultivation.⁹ With the commencement of the Anglo-Burmese war in 1824 things took a critical turn. Even the government faced a serious financial crisis. Owing to a sharp fall in the prices of the Bengal raw materials in England there was a vicious depression in

the country trade.¹⁰ The agency houses began to crumble one after the other. And since the heaviest investment of the agency houses was in indigo, the planters were driven into a tight corner. The government of course came to their rescue. Amherst's Regulation VI of 1823 had allowed the planters the right "to recover advances with interest by a summary suit from the indigo crop."¹¹ But the planters were not quite happy with this. Then came Bentinck's Regulation V of 1830. It bound the Indian peasant by harsher contracts under which a ryot who, after taking advances from a planter, showed his unwillingness to sow indigo was liable to be prosecuted in the magistrate's court. Such insidious contracts, and for that matter, regulations, though highly unfair to the peasants, failed to satisfy the planters. Some newer economic measures were necessary and these were attempted by the Charter Act of 1833.¹²

Immediately before the renewal of the charter in 1833, the subject of settlement of British nationals in India was taken up by important business and commercial organizations in Britain who brought their influence to bear on the British government. The Liverpool East Indian Committee suggested unrestricted settlement of British nationals in India before the Parliamentary Select Committee.¹³

Plea for British Immigrants

The same suggestion came from the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. According to the latter, the obvious means to increase the products and trade of India "was permitting British subjects to hold land."¹⁴ Holt Mackenzie when asked about the possible advantage of the settlement of British nationals in India said, "I consider every European who settles in India must add something to the revenue."¹⁵

We have already noted that among the most arduous Indian advocates of colonization were Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarakanath Tagore. In a meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall on 15 December 1829 they spoke vigorously for the unrestricted settlement of Europeans in India. Ram Mohan said: "As to the indigo planters, I beg to observe that I have travelled through several districts in Bengal and Bihar, and I found the natives residing in the neighbourhood of indigo plantations evidently better-clothed and better-conditioned than those who live at a distance from such stations."¹⁶ Dwarakanath in his turn said: "With reference to the subject immediately before the meeting, I beg to state that I have several zamindaris in various districts and I found the cultivation of indigo and the residence of Europeans have considerably benefited the country and the community at large."¹⁷ A memorandum by Ram Mohan and Dwarakanath signed and strongly recommended by Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, was submitted to the British Parliament. It contained more or less the speeches of Ram Mohan and Dwarakanath.¹⁸

The background story of the Charter Act of 1833 will not be

complete if we leave out Ram Mohan's replies to the questionnaire prepared by the Select Committee of the House of Commons in February 1831 which considered the renewal of the Company's charter. Ram Mohan was asked to give his evidence on the basis of questions put by the committee. He tendered his evidence in the form of successive "communications" to the Board of Control.¹⁹ The entire evidence is to be found in the General Appendix to the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company which was published in 1831-33.²⁰ A very important part of Ram Mohan's evidence was a short paper on settlement in India by Europeans in which he demanded, as he had done before, that the restrictions imposed by the old charter on "the lease and purpose of lands" by Europeans in India should be withdrawn. He then enumerated nine advantages that might result from unrestricted settlement of Europeans. Some of these advantages were the spread of education, investment of European capital in agriculture in India and the possibility of India being governed liberally by an "enlightened government". Ram Mohan spoke of certain disadvantages as well, but did not consider them serious or irremediable. He recommended that "educated persons of character and capital should now be permitted and encouraged to settle in India, without any restriction of locality or any liability to banishment, at the discretion of the government."²¹

Protests Ignored

In India, on the other hand, there were many who disliked the idea of Free Trade and colonization. Immediately after the aforesaid memorandum was sent to the British Parliament, a section of Bengali zamindars opposed it vehemently and sent a petition. They disputed nearly everything that Ram Mohan and Dwarkanath had claimed.

In the districts where the indigo planters and others have in a manner settled themselves, the people are more injured and distressed than in other parts of the country, in consequence of such indigo planters taking possession of land by force, sowing indigo by destroying rice plant (which is the cause of diminution in the produce of rice and dearth of the articles of consumption), detaining cattle of and extorting money from poor individuals, whose frequent complaints induced the Indian government to pass Regulation 6, 1823; nevertheless, if they be permitted to hold any zamindari or landed property here, the native zamindars and their ryots must be unavoidably ruined.²²

But such voices of protest had but little impression on the British government and the Charter Act was renewed on 20 August 1833.

The East India Company's monopoly had met with severe criticism just before the renewal of the charter in 1813 and there was a persistent demand for the cancellation of the Company's trade privileges. The Charter Act of 1813 wrested the monopoly rights from the Company leaving it with exclusive rights only of the China trade. In 1833 even that

was taken away. Complete Free Trade was declared. All restrictions on the settlement of British nationals were withdrawn and British capitalists were allowed to invest capital freely in plantation crops.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Irfan Habib has said, Great Britain not content with merely capturing the Indian commodities, was intent on capturing the Indian market as a whole. "The changed objective did not only make the East India Company's monopoly over Indian internal commerce and overseas trade obsolete, but positively required Free Trade. The Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833 largely accomplished this change."²³ At the core of this new policy was the export of raw materials from India to England which shot up spectacularly after 1833. Raw cotton exports rose from 9 million pounds in weight in 1813 to 32 million in 1833 and 88 million in 1844.²⁴ At the same time, as a result of the withdrawal of monopoly there was a sizable rise in British exports to India where Britain succeeded in extending its market. This had disastrous results for this country. While British goods poured into India at negligibly low rate of duties, Indian commodities were subjected to high duties.²⁵ The industrial capitalists of Britain had a clear policy in view. They wanted to turn India into an agricultural colony of British capitalism—a colony that would go on supplying raw materials cheaply and buying manufactured goods dearly. Thomas Bazley, president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce said to the Parliamentary Enquiry Committee in 1840, "In India there is an immense extent of territory, and the population of it would consume British manufactures to a most enormous extent. The whole question with respect to our Indian trade is whether they can pay us, by the products of their soil, for what we are prepared to send out as manufactures."²⁶

Open Door

Clauses 81-86 of the Charter Act of 1833 enumerated the free entry and settlement of the British nationals in India. It was now permissible for the "natural-born subject of His Majesty to proceed by sea to the Company's possessions, to reside therein, to acquire and hold lands or to make profits out of such residence without licence."²⁷ The natural-born subjects were authorized to acquire and hold lands for any number of years. The Despatch of 10 December 1834 on the Charter Act of 1833 stated by way of explaining the clauses relating to "free ingress" of Europeans into India: "The regulations which you shall make with the just and humane design of protecting the natives from ill-treatment must not be such as to harass the European with any unnecessary restraints or to give him uneasiness by the display of improper distrust and suspicion."²⁸

This sanction of 'colonization' for which Ram Mohan and Dwarkanath had struggled so avidly proved disastrous for India, for this was exactly the thing which the indigo planters also had been demanding in order to increase their profit and to tighten their grip on the whole

plantation system. Unrestricted residence of British nationals in India brought in its wake unrestrained oppression as well. Indigo planters whose interests were best served by these clauses of the Act of 1833, now established themselves as veritable rulers of the plantation areas treating the ryots with bias and contempt. The new plantation system was in truth nothing but 'thinly veiled slavery'.²⁰

The history of the thirty years following the Charter Act of 1833 showed indubitably that Ram Mohan's unflinching advocacy of the European indigo planter was not only wrong but also dangerous. The apologists of Ram Mohan do not, however, think that he was wrong in his advocacy of the European indigo planters. Collet puts it this way: "An outcry of the baser order of nationalism having been raised against the indigo planters of Bengal, Ram Mohan came boldly to the defence of those aspersed Europeans."²⁰ Susobhan Sarker writes: "In the days of Ram Mohan, the cultivation of indigo still seemed to be a forward move away from traditional agriculture and holding out hopes of material advancement for the peasants. The oppressive aspect of the system was yet undeveloped and little known."²¹ The arguments of the defenders of Ram Mohan boil down to two points: first, the oppressive aspect of the indigo plantation system was undeveloped in the days of Ram Mohan and cases of oppression were few and far between and little known; secondly, the indigo plantation system seemed (to Ram Mohan, of course) to be a forward move away from traditional agriculture and held out hopes of material advancement for the peasants.

Blind Spot

There is no denying that after the Charter Act of 1833 the situation in the indigo plantations became insufferably vicious and that cases of "murder, homicide, riot, arson, dacoity, plunder and kidnapping"²² multiplied. But this cannot possibly be taken to mean that the oppressive aspect of the system was undeveloped and little known before 1833.

As early as 1808 Buchanan Hamilton wrote that the reason why the peasants of Bengal were thoroughly dissatisfied with the planters was that once they accepted advances they were treated as though they were slaves. The planters gave them no opportunity whatsoever of repaying and forced them to take more advances thus perpetuating the obligation of the ryots. They deceived the ryots in two ways—by false measurement of land and false weight of the produce.²³

On 13 July 1810 Governor-General Lord Minto said in a statement that the notice of the government had been attracted to the "numerous abuses and oppressions" of the European indigo planters and that the cases of oppression that had been proved in courts of the magistrates and in the Supreme Court were so grave and flagrant in nature that the Governor-General-in-Council even considered it an act of indispensable public duty to adopt measures to prevent the repetition of such offences.²⁴ In the same year the licences previously granted to four planters

to reside in the interior of the country were withdrawn on account of their ill-treatment of the ryots.⁸⁵

Samachar Darpan, the first Bengali weekly newspaper, published in some detail on 18 May 1822 the wicked ways of the indigo planters. It presented a very distressing picture of the ryots' helplessness. A ryot who once took the 'advance' lost all freedom for life. There was hardly any settlement of accounts, and for fear of being kept in captivity the ryots took more 'advances'.⁸⁶ The planters' oppression did not escape the notice of Bishop Heber who arrived in Calcutta on 10 October 1823 and wrote in March 1825 that the inhuman oppression of the European indigo planters lowered "English character in native eyes."⁸⁷

Regulation VI of 1823 and Regulation V of 1830, passed ostensibly to redress the suffering of the ryots, served in fact the interest of the planters and strengthened their hands. Regulation V of 1830 "made ryots who broke indigo contracts liable to prosecution and penal consequences in the magistrate's court, as for a misdemeanour." This regulation thus in effect empowered the planters to prosecute in the criminal courts those ryots who had taken—or more correctly, had been forced to take—*dadans* (advances). This was surely one of the blackest of the Acts passed by the government in those days.

The System Exposed

These are enough to disprove the contention that indigo planters' oppression was rare and 'little known'. It now remains to be seen how much sound is the view that indigo plantation held out prospects of 'material advancement for the peasants'. For the ryot, as will be seen presently, indigo plantation was virtually unremunerative. The planter's sole object was to make maximum profit at a minimum cost. He got the indigo plant often without paying the ryot its cost or sometimes, paying merely a nominal price. But heavy and totally unfair deductions made even this nominal price dwindle 'to little or nothing'.⁸⁸ The ryot was not only bound as a matter of fact to sow indigo on the best plots of land but was bound also to pay gratuities to the *gomastahs* of the planters who often kept a body of marauders to get things done. The obnoxious 'contract' which passed rather hereditarily on to the sons and grandsons of the ryot was thus a terrible noose round his neck. As the Indigo Commission remarked, "Once a ryot took advance he was never afterwards a free man". In 1835 even Lord Macaulay who was never known to have any great love for the poor Indian peasants, wrote: "that great evils exist, that great injustice is consequently committed, that many ryots have been brought, partly by the operation of the law, partly by acts committed in defiance of law, into a state not far removed from that of partial slavery is, I fear, too certain".⁸⁹ What Macaulay wrote in 1835 was very much true of the state of affairs in Ram Mohan's days also. The planters had neither scruples nor respect for the law and many of them maintained a band of desperadoes to fight rival planters and zamindars and "being

members of the ruling race had little concern for the interest of the peasant".⁴⁰

The cultivation of indigo, it should be amply clear by now, gave at no time any economic inducement to the ryots and as such nothing other than "oppression and ill-usage could work such a system."⁴¹ It is difficult therefore to see how on earth a system in which European indigo planters thrived on the staggering impoverishment of the peasants could at all hold out prospects of material advancement for them.

The question that now obviously presents itself is: why did Ram-Mohan in whom social awareness was the supreme virtue⁴² fail to see through the intentions of the British in India? This leads us inevitably to Ram Mohan's views about the peasants⁴³ and the various influences that perhaps moulded those views. Ram Mohan's evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1831 contains his economic views in general. He seems to be the first Indian to have analyzed the socio-economic condition of the country in a broad and empirical way. His answers to the 54 queries put by the Select Committee and his paper on the revenue system of India, together, of course, with his answers to the 13 additional queries reflect unmistakably his deep and sincere concern for the ryots: "Such is the melancholy condition of the agricultural labourers that it always gives me the greatest pain to allude to it."⁴⁴ Ram Mohan said that even *khudkasht* ryots (those who traditionally cultivated the lands of their own village) had their occupancy rights recognized in earlier times. Those rights were wrested from them by the regulations of 1793.⁴⁵ Ram Mohan felt that the permanent settlement benefited the zamindars and ignored the ryots. He came out with the suggestion that any further rent rise should be ruled out. There should be a cut in the rent to be demanded by the zamindars. Such a cut would obviously mean a fall in the income of the government. But this could be met by increasing taxes on luxuries and other unnecessary items and by employing, as collectors, natives in place of Europeans.⁴⁶

Inconsistency

A curious ambivalence is writ large in Ram Mohan's evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Commons. He showed deep concern for the peasants and yet made scathing criticism of the Ryotwari system.⁴⁷ He admitted that the permanent settlement had failed in its principal objects and yet he never spoke of discarding it and only urged that there should be some sort of a revision of it.⁴⁸ Ram Mohan appealed "to any and every authority to devise some mode of alleviating the present miseries of the agricultural peasantry of India"⁴⁹ and yet he pleaded strongly for the unrestricted settlement of Europeans in India, for he believed that the European indigo planters performed considerable good "to the generality of the natives of this country". Ram Mohan's economic views were not free from inconsistencies.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the old class of zamindars

had been replaced by a new one, mostly composed of absentee landlords. Ram Mohan not only belonged to this class of proprietors who were "enriched by the plunders of millions of poor peasants" but was their mouthpiece.⁵⁰ His connections with the aristocracy whose dependence on the British had earned them great fortune sometimes inhibited his outlook and it was not always possible for him to ignore the interests of his class. This explains, to a certain degree, his advocacy of the indigo planters. In fact, Ram Mohan's strong plea for the indigo planters punched a hole in his radicalism.

Ram Mohan had among other qualities an "openness to new experience", both with people and the new ways of doing things.⁵¹ It need not be doubted anyway that he had a mind that constantly "looked out",⁵² that the influence on him of western liberal and utilitarian principles was considerable and wholesome. There were thus in Ram Mohan's intellectual make-up two completely different, almost opposite, influences that evoked completely different, almost opposite, responses.

To return from this useful digression to our main theme, it must now be said that Ram Mohan, in spite of his being the most inquiring and the most 'modern' man of his day, seemed to have unwittingly slipped into advocacy of the indigo planters and European settlement in India.

SUBHAS BHATTACHARYA

- ¹ E J Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, (Vol 3 of Pelican Economic History of Britain) 1969, Ch 12, p 225.
- ² *Ibid.*, Ch. 12, p 232.
- ³ *Ibid.*, Ch 12, p 231.
- ⁴ Pramode Sengupta, *Nil Bidroha O Bangali Samaj* (in Bengali) Calcutta 1960, p 22.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p 22.
- ⁶ The letter has been quoted at length by Promode Sengupta, *op. cit.*, p 158.
- ⁷ Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *Sambadpatra Sekaler Katha* (in Bengali) Vol 1, Calcutta p 384-5.
- ⁸ A Tripathi, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833*, Ch 1.
- ⁹ N K Sinha in the *History of Bengal 1757-1905*, Calcutta 1967, p 128.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 124.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons (1833), Vol 2, Part 2 quoted in Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol 1, p 383.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Select Committee Report, Vol 2, Part I, quoted in Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, p 384.
- ¹⁶ The full text of Ram Mohan's speech was reproduced in the *Asiatic Journal*, Vol 2, New Series, May-August, 1830 and has been reprinted in *Rammohan Rachanavali*, First edition, Calcutta, p 529.
- ¹⁷ Dwarakanath's speech also appeared in the *Asiatic Journal*. Part of it has been quoted in Pramode Sengupta, *op. cit.*, p 160.
- ¹⁸ *British Parliamentary Papers*, Vol 45.
- ¹⁹ S D Collet, *The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohan Roy*, D K Biswas and P C Ganguli (Eds) Calcutta, p 319.
- ²⁰ Amal Home, *Rammohan Roy: The Man and His Work*, Rammohan Centenary Publicity Booklet No 1, Calcutta, 1933, referred to in the supplementary notes by editors in Collet, *op. cit.*, p 382.

- ²¹ *The English Works of Rammohan Roy*, Part 3, Calcutta 1947, p 85.
- ²² The memorandum submitted to the British Parliament by the zamindars of Bengal, quoted in Pramode Sengupta, *op. cit.*, p 160-64.
- ²³ Irfan Habib, "Colonization of Indian Economy, 1747-1903" *Social Scientist* 32, p 37.
- ²⁴ R Palme Dutt, *India Today*, Bombay 1949, p 119.
- ²⁵ R C Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, Publications Division Vol 1, 1970 Preface XXVI; See also J Beauchamp, *British Imperialism in India*, p 29.
- ²⁶ Quoted in R Palme Dutt, *op. cit.*, p 118.
- ²⁷ N K Sinha, *op. cit.*, p 136.
- ²⁸ Despatch from the Court of Directors to the Government of India, 10 December 1834, on the Charter Act of 1833. For extracts see A C Banerjee, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Calcutta 1961, Vol 1, p 272, para 43.
- ²⁹ R Palme Dutt, *op. cit.*, p 118.
- ³⁰ S D Collet, *op. cit.*, p 269.
- ³¹ Amit Sen, *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance*, Calcutta 1957, p 38.
- ³² Haran Chandra Chakladar, in "Fifty Years Ago—the Woes of a Class of Bengal Peasantry under European Indigo Planters", *Dawn Magazine*, Calcutta 1905 quoted Sir Ashley Eden, the magistrate of Barasat, who reported to the Indigo Commission 49 serious cases of offences committed by the planters.
- ³³ Referred to by N K Sinha in his introduction to Benoy Ghosh (Ed), *Samayikpatre Banglar Samaj Chaitra*, (in Bengali) Vol 1, Calcutta 1962.
- ³⁴ C E Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors* Vol 1, p 238-9.
- ³⁵ Sir J P Grant, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, referred to this in his Minute on the Report of the Indigo Commission, quoted by Buckland, *op. cit.*
- ³⁶ Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay, *op. cit.*, quoted by Pramode Sengupta, *op. cit.*, p 13.
- ³⁷ Quoted by Nirmal Sinha, *Freedom Movement in Bengal—Who's Who*, Education Department, Government of West Bengal, Introduction XXVI.
- ³⁸ H C Chakladar, *op. cit.*
- ³⁹ Lord Macaulay's Minute of 17 October 1835, quoted in D R Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times*, 1971, p 48.
- ⁴⁰ Gadgil, *op. cit.*, p 48.
- ⁴¹ A Tripathi, in *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Part 1, Bombay 1963, p 1098
- ⁴² Bela Dutt Gupta, *Sociology in India*, Calcutta 1972, Ch 3, p 51.
- ⁴³ Ram Mohan's economic views are to be found in *The English Works of Raja Rammohan Roy*, Part 3. Apart from this, Susobhan Chandra Sarker's *Rammohan Roy on Indian Economy*, Calcutta 1965 is possibly the only book presenting Ram Mohan's economic views in a single volume. This book moreover contains a brilliant introduction by Sarker.
- ⁴⁴ *The English Works of Raja Rammohan Roy*, Part 3, p 49.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p 40, Q No 8.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 58-9.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p 70.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p 50.
- ⁴⁹ Collet, *op. cit.*, p 320.
- ⁵⁰ A Mitra in *Census 1951*, Vol VI, Part IA, p 442.
- ⁵¹ Alex Inkeles in *The OM Scale: A Comparative Sociopsychological Measure of Individual Modernity*, rated "openness to new experience" first in importance of the qualities that make an individual modern: quoted by B Dutt Gupta, *op. cit.*, Ch 3, p 48.
- ⁵² B Dutt Gupta *op. cit.*, Ch 3, p 61.

BOOK REVIEWS

Review Articles

Dialectical Materialism and Scientific Method

LOREN R GRAHAM, *SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE SOVIET UNION*, Allen Lane 1973, p 584, £ 7.00.

THE COMMITMENT to study the sciences is central to an understanding of modern materialism since the principles of materialism are "not the starting point of investigation, but its final result; they are not applied to nature and human history, but abstracted from them; it is not nature and the realm of humanity which conform to these principles, but the principles are valid in so far as they are in conformity with nature and history."¹ Thus a knowledge of the sciences, both natural and social, their achievements, the process of their growth and their inter-relationships, is essential for a conception of nature which is dialectical and at the same time materialist. Dialectical materialism concerns itself with the most general laws of motion of nature, history and thought. The search for these most general laws, based on a knowledge of the sciences, is a 'philosophic' enterprise. Scientific philosophy as the study of most general laws of motion develops in close connection with the development of specialized sciences. Marxist philosophy is, in the words of Engels, "a world outlook which has to establish its validity and be applied not in a science of sciences standing apart, but in the positive sciences."²

Engels maintained that the scientists, like all other sections of society, do not possess a choice between having a philosophy and none at all; but "natural scientists may adopt whatever attitude they please, they will still be under the domination of philosophy. It is only a question whether they want to be dominated by a bad, fashionable philosophy or by a form of thought which rests on acquaintance with the history of thought and its achievements."³ The validity of this assertion is fully corroborated by Graham's study of the relationship between science and philosophy in the Soviet Union which convincingly brings out the fact that "dialectical materialism has influenced the work of some Soviet scientists, that in

certain cases these influences helped them to arrive at views that won them international recognition.”⁴ Further, he says, “if we admit the legitimacy of asking fundamental questions about the nature of things of which man is a part, the approach represented by dialectical materialism—science-oriented, rational, materialistic—has some claims of superiority to available rival systems of thought, claims it is appropriate to receive with respect.”⁵

The volume covers debates ranging over relativity-physics, quantum mechanics, resonance chemistry, cybernetics, cosmology, the origin of life, and physiology. These topics which are covered in separate chapters in the book are considered by the author as an “initial sketching out of what is the largest, most intriguing nexus of scientific-philosophical-political issues in the 20th century”. Graham’s work is not a blatant anti-soviet, anti-communist study of this ‘most intriguing nexus’. His treatment is scholarly though biased in favour of his own philosophical position of critical realism. This becomes evident when he asserts that “materialism, like its denial, is a philosophical position based on assumptions that can neither be proved nor disproved in any rigorous sense”⁶. Whilst his criticisms, disagreements and suggestions regarding Marxist philosophy of science are influenced by this belief in realism, he does not subscribe to the anti-Marxist notions prevalent among Western “Marxiologists.”

Marxiologist and Critical Realist Bias

One of the intellectual exercises in which the Western “Marxiologists” indulge is that conception of dialectical materialism is not present in Marx and is indeed foreign to his thought and it is Engels who is responsible for bringing in the natural sciences in the Marxist thought. Graham rightly maintains that such “Marxiologists” have erred in implying that Marx was interested only in human nature and not in physical nature. He sums up this debate in the following words: “It is one thing to say that Marx never committed himself to finding dialectical laws in nature to the extent to which Engels did; it is quite another to say that such an effort contradicted Marx’s thought, particularly when Marx is known to have supported the effort on several occasions”⁷. The facts of Marx’s support to Engels’s effort are well documented. Engels read the entire manuscript of his *Anti-Duhring* to Marx, who presented no objections and even contributed a chapter himself for inclusion in the book. Engels started working on *Dialectics of Nature* in 1873, ten years before Marx’s death and their correspondence illustrates that Marx fully shared Engels’s interest. Marx also made references to the dialectical character of natural processes in *Capital*.

Many writers in the West have commented that while Engels in *Anti-Duhring* maintains a positivistic position, that is, all knowledge must be composed of verifiable data derived from nature, in *Dialectics of Nature* he maintains a metaphysical dialectical position. Graham does not subscribe to such anti-Marxist rubbish and maintains that.

Engels in *Anti-Duhring* directed his chief criticism against a philosopher (Duhring) for not being materialist, while in *Dialectics of Nature* he, more in passing, admonished scientists (such as Karl Vogt, Ludwig Buchner, and Jacob Moleschott) for not being dialectical. But in both works Engels attempted to locate a balance point . . . In *Anti-Duhring* the reputedly positivistic work, Engels also presented some of his best known discussion of the dialectic in nature, while in *Dialectics of Nature* the work supposedly heavily Hegelian in inspiration, he stoutly defended the concept of the materiality of the Universe".⁸

At places the bias of the author in favour of a critical realistic position leads him to look for an ambiguity in Lenin's work through which he would like to maintain that Lenin's adherence to materialism is of an assumptive character. Graham goes on to compare the Marxist position on the materiality of the Universe, as arrived at through the investigations of the sciences, with that of the empiricist philosopher Quine. According to the latter the concept of physical objects is a 'superior myth' validated by pragmatic success. The intention is to illustrate the complementary character of the two positions. Such comparisons result from an inadequate appreciation of the rôle of the relationship between theory and practice in Marxist philosophy. Graham, characteristically a 'realist' holds the erroneous opinion that the aspect of the unity of theory and practice "is not so much an integral part of the intellectual structure of the system as it is a methodological principle."⁹

Stalin's Intellectual Leadership

The unity of theory and practice is central to Marxist epistemology. Graham wrongly and in a rather simplistic manner identified this concept with the exigency of practical return from theoretical endeavours. For Marx "the question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question".¹⁰ For dialectical materialist epistemology "all mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice".¹¹ The unity of theory and practice is the point of departure for Marxist philosophy as is evident from Marx's famous assertion: "Philosophers have interpreted the world, the point however is to change it." For Marxist philosophy, a thought that is not equipped with the requisites for changing reality is impotent.

The denial of this unity as organic to Marxist thought leads Graham to abhor the idea of centralized political power wedded with the philosophic thought of dialectical materialism and in it he finds the roots of all that he considers undesirable. His lack of appreciation of the development and growth of science and society under the political and intellectual

leadership of Stalin is well matched with, if not inspired by, the present regime's attempts to undermine the role played by Stalin in the construction and defence of socialism. Graham, while he does not conceal his hostility to Stalin has not been able to advance much material to prove that Stalin's role was detrimental to the development of Soviet science. As a matter of fact he himself points out that it was during Stalin's lifetime that the attempts of Chelnitsev—who wanted to oppose the development of resonance chemistry—were defeated.¹² It was also under Stalin's intellectual leadership that the famous Soviet scientist Schmidt, an important participant in the cosmology debate, observed in 1929 that

Western science is not monolithic. It would be a great mistake indiscriminately to label it 'bourgeois' or 'idealistic'... There are no conscious dialectical materialists in the West but elements of the dialectic appear among very many scientific thinkers, often in idealistic or eclectic garb. Our task is to find these kernels and to refine and use them.

Graham in subsequent chapters on quantum physics, relativity and cosmology, himself points out that it was during Stalin's leadership that discussion of theoretical and philosophical issues arising out of the new discoveries of science was going on in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and tolerance and with full scientific rigour. The present Soviet leadership's attempt to malign Stalin's intellectual policy for the well-known Lysenko affair also stands exposed in the light of the fact that it was Khrushchev and his ilk who supported Lysenko till much after Stalin's death¹³. However, Graham maintains that "one of the more specific conclusions issuing from this research is that controversy known best outside the Soviet Union—the debate over genetics—is the least relevant to dialectical materialism in a philosophical sense".¹⁴ Occasional errors of judgement do not by any means negate the validity of the basic tenets underlying such attempts. The measure of validity of these tenets is the success and achievement of science in the socialist countries. Graham's study vividly describes and ably analyzes the story of the growth of science in the Soviet Union, the controversies of interpretation around major scientific theories and the relative amount of freedom available to the philosopher-scientists to review, revise and change their views.

Quantum Mechanics Controversy: No Dogmatization

The controversy regarding the interpretation of the mathematical formalism of quantum mechanics is not confined only to the Soviet Union but philosophers and scientists all over the world have exercised themselves over it. Physicists and philosophers like Bohm, Vigier, Popper and Bunge in the West have not accepted the idealistic Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum mechanics and are engaged in a search for realist or materialist interpretation of this most important development in physics. In Soviet Union too, this interpretation has aroused a great deal of controversy. Graham's study traces its historical development and summarizes the

position of three main participants in this debate, Blokhintsev, Fock and Omelianovsky.

The Copenhagen Interpretation developed by Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg seeks to resolve the contradictions of previous interpretations of De Broglie and Born by postulating that no observable has a value before a measurement of that observable has been made and therefore it becomes meaningless to speak of characteristics of matter or of matter as such at any particular moment without empirical data in hand relating to that moment. In a typically positivist fashion reality is made observation-dependent. The 'ideal' of objective physical reality existing independent of the observer is pronounced dead and it is proclaimed that the aim of quantum mechanics is to relate only strictly observable quantities. Most physicists enamoured by the success of the formalism of quantum mechanics uncritically accepted such an interpretation. Describing the situation Mario Bunge made the observation that

contemporary physicists are diehard positivists of the 20s and 30s: they have imbibed this subject-centred philosophy as undergraduates—and...not in philosophy courses but in physics courses. Almost every physics textbook decrees that no symbol is physically meaningful unless it is "defined" by a set of laboratory operations, and gives the impression that there would be no event without observers. While in the early 1600s the conservative philosopher would refuse to look through the scientist's telescope, as late as 1960s most physicists still refuse to use the logoscope built in recent years by the philosopher. Thus they will insist on interpreting every symbol in terms of human operations even though a logical analysis of the given symbol fails to disclose its dependence on the observer, and even if the operation itself is impossible as for example, the measurement of a field strength at a given time and at every point on a given surface. For the first time in history, scientists have managed to outdogmatize philosophers.¹⁵

The Soviet experience is different: here neither the philosophers nor the scientists could be dogmatized.

Materialism Changes Forms

Right through the heyday of Copenhagen Interpretation, the Soviet scientists did not accept its positivistic trapping although Fock did accept what he considered the valid scientific kernel in Bohr's interpretation. The discussion between Bohr and Fock also resulted in the former shifting his position away from positivism. Fock thus recollected his conversation with Bohr: "In particular it became clear that Bohr completely recognized the objectivity of atoms and their properties, recognized that it was necessary to give up determinism only in the Laplacian sense, but not causality in general."¹⁶

In spite of their varying views regarding the interpretations of the results of quantum mechanics, Soviet scientists all agree that quantum mechanics is the study of existing micro-objects and their regularities. This

on-going debate on the nature of causality and matter is a proof of the validity of Engels's statement: "With each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science (not to speak of the history of mankind) materialism has to change its forms."

Debate on Einstein's New Physics

Graham's treatment of the relativity theory dispels the erroneous notion, prevalent in the Western world that because of the doctrinaire approach of the Soviet scientists and philosophers, relativity theory was opposed in the Soviet Union for a long time. The debate over the implications of the relativity theory was not at all peculiar to the Soviet Union, yet already by 1926 a Soviet scientist had noted that Einstein's new physics not only did not contradict dialectical materialism but brilliantly confirmed it. The great esteem in which Einstein is held in the Soviet Union can be gauged from the fact that the first and only comprehensive edition of the collected scientific works of Einstein to be published in the world, appeared in Russian translation in 1960. Further, internationally renowned Soviet scientists A D Aleksandrov and V A Fock are the most able exponents of the relativity theory. Aleksandrov and Fock armed with the theory, method and world view of dialectical materialism approached Einstein's theory of relativity, elaborated and developed it. The dialectical materialist approach is not only not extraneous to their work but has positively contributed to their scientific work. Aleksandrov notes:

My professional activity involves mainly the proof of new theorems. And for me Marxist-Leninist philosophy is an unquestioned guide in comprehending general questions of my science. Dialectical materialism, needless to say, does not offer methods for solving specific problems in mathematical science but it indicates true reference points for searches for scientific truth and arms one with methods for elucidating the true import of theories and the content of scientific concepts. I could cite examples showing how philosophy helps one master the mathematical theory of infinite numbers, Einstein's theory of relativity or quantum mechanics."

Characterizing the rupture between philosophy and science as unfortunate he comments that

in our scientific milieu one still encounters a pragmatic or, to put it more simply, a narrow-minded view of science in which people turn away from its general and philosophical questions, reducing it to the solution of individual particularized problems. This view is a decided hindrance to the posing of fundamental theoretical problems and to searches for new lines of research.¹⁷

Fock observing the nature of dialectical materialist philosophy points out to its use and function in the development of science: "The ability of this form of philosophy to keep pace with science is one of its characteristic features. Dialectical materialism is a living and not a dogmatic philosophy. It helps to give to experience obtained in one of the domains of science a

formulation of such generality it may be applied to other domains."¹⁸

The questions about the origin and structure of the universe studied by cosmology and cosmogony contain significant implications for philosophic and religious systems. Many of the Western astronomers and physicists like James Jean, Arthur Eddington, Hoyle, Bondi and Weizsacker have tried to use results obtained in this field to buttress their own religious world outlook and provide the scientific basis, as it were, for the existence of God. It is not only Soviet scientists like Schmidt, Ambartsumian, Nann and Zel'manov who as convinced adherents of the philosophy of dialectical materialism oppose such views from a scientific viewpoint, but many scientists in the Western world also are repelled by such anti-scientific attempts. British astronomer William Bonnor wrote: "It is the business of science to offer rational explanations for the events in the real world, and any scientist who calls on God to explain something is falling down on his job".¹⁹ He characterized the attempts of obscurantist scientist philosophers as scientifically inexcusable. Through a good discussion, in simple terms, of the various and sometimes opposing views held by scientists in relation to various models to understand and explain the origin of universe Graham comes to the conclusion that philosophy of dialectical materialism has been very important for the Soviet scientists in all these debates. "The degree to which dialectical materialism has been important to them is not something that the outside observer, who comes from a society that scoffs at dialectical materialism, can easily assess."²⁰

Origin of Life

The topic of the origin of life is a most absorbing area of the interaction between Marxist-Leninist philosophy and science. A I Oparin, the renowned scientist who adheres to the view of qualitatively distinct levels of nature wrote:

Only dialectical materialism has found the correct routes to an understanding of life. According to dialectical materialism, life is a special form of the movement of matter, which arises as a new quality at a definite stage in the historical development of matter. Therefore, it possesses properties that distinguish it from the inorganic world, and is characterized by special, specific regularities that are not reducible merely to the regularities of physics and chemistry.²¹

Oparin's theory about the origin of life, based on sound materialist principles is characterized by the conception: "Life has neither arisen spontaneously nor has it existed eternally. It must have, therefore, resulted from a long evolution of matter, its origin being merely one step in the course of its historical development".²² The origin of life for Oparin and Fesenkov is a result of the evolution of matter. They maintain that

from the point of view of dialectical materialism life is material in nature, but it is not an inalienable property of all matter in general. On the contrary, it is inherent only in a living being and is not found in objects of the inorganic world. Life is a special, very complex and

perfect form of motion of matter. It is not separated from the rest of the world by an unbridgeable gap, but arises in the process of development of matter, at a definite stage of this development as a new formerly absent quality.²³

According to this conception life is a flow, an exchange, a dialectical unity. "An organism can live and maintain itself only so long as it is continually exchanging material energy with its environment".²⁴ Through a study of the work of this most outstanding Soviet scientist in his field, Graham observes that it cannot be seriously maintained that dialectical materialism was merely something to which Oparin paid lip service. The author maintains that dialectical materialist philosophy, which he helped to elaborate, had systematic influence upon his scientific arguments.

Cybernetics, Physiology and Psychology

Cybernetics, the science of control and communication directed towards fending off increasing entropy or disorder, enjoys an unparalleled prestige in the Soviet Union. Cybernetics, a combination of two seemingly contradictory principles, local control based upon empirical evidence and over-riding centralized purposes, has been put to practical use in the Soviet Union in diverse fields ranging from economic planning to scientific research. The urge for rational planning, characteristic of a socialist system, has provided the development of cybernetics an impetus which has led to tremendous growth of the discipline in spite of initial reservations. The philosophical issue that cybernetics has put in the forefront is of the possibility of the duplication of human thought processes. Marxist philosophers are generally of the view that cybernetic machines do not equal human beings because "even the most complex robot does not assimilate, does not sense, does not remember, does not think, does not dream, does not fictionalize, does not seek".²⁵

The theoretical basis of the inability of computers to have consciousness is that matter at different levels of development possesses qualitative difference. To attribute mental powers to a mechanical agglomeration of transistors and circuits would be to make a mechanistic mistake of believing that all complex processes can be reduced to combinations of simple ones. The qualitative difference between man and 'thinking' machine is not technical but social. Further explorations in the field of cybernetics strengthen the scientific optimism and increase man's ability to control and change nature.

Graham's discussion of the developments in the field of physiology and psychology in the Soviet Union provides a good historical account. In pre-revolutionary Russia, materialist school of physiology and psychology developed under stiff opposition of governmental bureaucracy and the church. It was in this field more than any other, that the link between materialism in science and radical politics became evident. Pavlov, who made vital contribution in bringing psychic activity within the realm of phenomena to be studied by the objective methods of science, did realize

the significance of the relationship between philosophy and science. The discussion on Pavlov's reflex theory has led some Soviet scientists to a recognition of the distinction between philosophic and physiological import of the reflex principle. The Soviet scientists have enriched the materialist school of psychology and physiology through an open and free discussion and original research work. As Graham observes," the history of psychology in Russia in the years after the revolution is a very rich and contradictory story."²⁸

Graham's monumental work on the relationship of Soviet science and philosophy provides a sincere account of the activities in both the fields and thus would go a long way in fighting the 'inculcated ignorance' of the Western world about the Soviet Union. The ideologues of the capitalist system who assiduously try to distort the implications of the achievement of scientific theory and practice in the socialist world, preach the philosophy of positivism and neo-positivism to counter the increasing influence of the scientific philosophy of Marxism which provides the tools of critically apprehending and changing the world. Graham through his study has forcefully put before the English-speaking world that the active interaction between philosophy and science as existing in the Soviet Union, is well worth understanding and emulating. This study of the live controversies concerning modern science in which Soviet scientists are engaged shows not only scientific dynamism but also indicates serious and continuous attempts to enrich the categories of dialectical materialism. Such intellectual debates have helped Soviet science to march forward belying the common notion among 'outsiders' that official support to the philosophy of dialectical materialism has given rise to a dogmatic way of thinking among Soviet scientists.

This study succeeds in dispelling the notion that philosophy has little to do with the development of science. Neo-positivists who treat the relationship of science and philosophy as either mysterious or redundant have been given a hard blow by this concrete study of the interaction of science and philosophy. The book shows that a conscious confrontation with the philosophical implications of the growth of science is rewarding for both science and philosophy.

¹ F Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, Moscow 1959, p 54.

² *Ibid.*, p 166.

³ F Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow 1966, p 210.

⁴ L R Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union*, p 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 34-35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 61.

¹⁰ K Marx, "Thesis on Feurbach", *Selected Works*, Moscow 1970, p 28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 30.

¹² L R Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union*, pp 21 and 321.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p 242.

- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p 6.
- ¹⁵ Mario Bunge (Ed.), *Quantum Theory and Reality*, New York, p 4.
- ¹⁶ L. R. Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union*, p 94.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 122.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 128.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 114.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p 186.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p 261.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p 272.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p 278.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 287.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p 342.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 362.

Politics in the English Classroom

LOUIS KAMPF AND PAUL LAUTER (Eds), *THE POLITICS OF LITERATURE : DISSENTING ESSAYS ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH*, Vintage Books, New York 1973.

IT IS high time that the teachers of literature in our country did some hard collective thinking about the purpose and mode of their dignified but ineffective intellectual exercises. To judge by the reading habits of our 'educated' readers, the teaching of the finest specimens of English and Indian writing has no impact on their sensibility. A minority of dedicated and persevering students manage to survive the mill of literature teaching with their literary taste and sensibility comparatively unscathed. But students in general lose all interest in serious literature the moment they hand over their examination answer-books. They seldom read poetry after that momentous ceremony; and the kind of fiction they read makes it plain that they have not learned how to receive what the great novels aim at giving. The tragedy is that many of these become teachers of literature in their turn. Even a random statistical survey will disclose that the majority of the teachers of literature have strayed into the profession prompted more by the compulsions of personal economics than by a sense of dedication to transmit "humane" values. It must be a most disturbing thought, at least to some, that the teaching of literature which has much potential for radicalizing our consciousness in our conflict-ridden society is done in a spirit of social indifference and political irrelevance.

Till recently, the teachers of Indian literatures were discriminated against as inferior academics, were paid less, and, to add insult to injury, were derogatorily called *munshis* or *pandits*. If you call a group of people *pandits* for a fairly long time you should not be surprised if they develop some typical characteristics of that species: obscurantism in matters of ideas and a near-total insensitivity to the question of the relevance of what they teach to the pulsating variegated life around them.

Their intellectual retardation was perhaps facilitated by a tradition—or a misinterpreted tradition—which taught that literature and music were the two breasts of Saraswati and that an adult response to literature can be identified with the determination of *rasa*, *alankara* and *chhand* of verses portraying a decadent sensuality.

The English teacher suffered and continues to suffer from a different set of handicaps. Without acquiring even a semblance of inwardness with the rhythms of a foreign language he has to teach its literature to vast hordes of students who have no background knowledge of English history, culture, or life. The limit of our average English teacher's intellectual horizon is drawn by a vaguely understood ideology of British liberalism and empiricism and more often than not, his most "revolutionary" theoretical discovery is likely to be that a poem should be discussed "on its own terms" without "smuggling in" extra-literary paraphernalia drawn from philosophy, history, sociology and so forth. So far as the language aspect is concerned, an Englishman would be appalled to know what is going on in our classrooms in the name of English teaching. He would not believe his ears and he would heartily endorse the Hindi enthusiast's slogan "*Angrezi hatao*" (Eliminate English). Having no clear-cut national educational consensus regarding the purpose of English teaching in our country, the frustrations and irritations of the teachers and the students in the classrooms are only natural.

Radicals in a Dying Culture

Those who are interested in giving a radical ideological orientation to the teaching of English in the Indian universities and colleges will find *The Politics of Literature* stimulating and thought-provoking. The problems and perspectives of literature teaching in the USA are materially different from those obtaining in this country. But there are common elements. One such element is the student apathy. The editors of the book under review say: "Student incompetence, open admissions, degenerating standards, threatening legislators, cutbacks, female studies, realty-tax like, freeze on promotions, breakdown in air conditioning . . . The students remain angry, bored, or pedantic; the administration oppressive or stodgy; the journals tedious; the profession philistine."¹

Listen to what a veteran professor of English Sisirkumar Ghose has to say about the situation in India: "The unwanted majority, faced and fed up with an irrelevant syllabus ineffectively taught with outmoded methods of instruction, followed by a questionable system of examination, and with no job prospects at the end of a long-drawn farce, feels naturally frustrated and furious."²

Specifically, the problem of the radical literature teacher is, in the words of Sheila Delany, the following: "If you teach English literature, you may find it more difficult to relate left political convictions to teaching than do your friends in the social sciences, for your job is to disseminate the monuments of a culture many of whose central values you

reject"³

In other words, how to read bourgeois and feudal literature in a socialist way? It raises a host of problems of reading, interpreting and evaluating bourgeois and pre-bourgeois literature. These problems are not discussed in a planned or systematic way in this book. It is not meant to be an exercise in radical literary scholarship. Most of the essays intersperse critical comments with autobiographical narratives, are rambling and discursive, but of absorbing interest. The book is basically an exploration of the possible ways in which radical politics can be made to permeate the teaching of literature.

The contributors to the present volume are fully conscious of their political tasks as literary intellectuals. They are unanimous in their conviction, arrived at in the course of their bitter encounters with the academic and political authorities, that the problems teachers face are rooted in the fundamental political conflicts of society. The editors Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter had taken a leading part in the "Little Bourgeois Cultural Revolution" in the Modern Languages Association in 1968. All the contributors have been activists in the radical left political movement in the U S. Many of them were fired from their academic posts for political reasons. Some have spent short terms in jail.

Political Involvement

In their introductory paper Kampf and Lauter point out that the academic establishment resists every attempt to radicalize literature teaching by preaching professional specialization, academic integrity, maintenance of standards and avoidance of politics. Arguing against this ostrich-like smugness they say:

The voices preaching peace, peace, when there is no peace in America are, too often, the voices of academic tenure and privilege: those who have already substituted professional self-interest for the interests of students, who identify what's good for America as what's good for the Faculty Senate. For most of us, however, and for those whom privilege has not deadened to students and to literature, and to the needs of communities excluded from the campus, the problem isn't holding on to what we have, but finding how to participate in change. Both self-interest and commitments to social justice lead, we would argue, towards altering our roles as students or critics of literature.⁴

The contributors believe that teachers of literature should extend their activity beyond the classroom and help in the formation of socialist movement. Speaking for all of them Ellen Cantarow says in her paper "Why Teach Literature?":

Our responsibility as teachers of literature, then, in rebuilding scholarship, a new intelligentsia, an active socialist movement, is no different from the responsibility of our comrades in history, in economics, in biology. Our particular responsibility as teachers of literature is to act on the humanizing knowledge art can give us to

construct with our students in class new, revolutionary ideas of culture, and to construct with them outside the classroom both an active socialist movement and culture.⁵

The editors pointedly draw our attention to a crucial difference between the nineteenth-century criticism and the academic criticism of our own times. The major critics of the eighteenth century—Samuel Johnson, Denis Diderot, and Gotthold Lessing—were aware of the educative role of the critical activity. The nineteenth-century stalwarts like Sainte-Beuve, Matthew Arnold and Ralph Emerson succeeded in extending the educational role. But in our times critical works are written to fulfil academic requirements and to win promotions. The problem posed by the editors is how to restore the educative function of criticism by integrating professional pursuits with the political imperatives.

It is instructive to contrast the general attitude expressed in the book with that of the British critic F R Leavis who has, in his own way, fought for the recognition of the educative value of the discipline of criticism. In his book, *English Literature in our Time and the University* he formulates his idea of the university thus: "The real university is a centre of consciousness and human responsibility for the civilized world; it is a creative centre of civilization—for the living heritage on which meaning and humane intelligence depend—and cannot, in our time, be maintained without a concentrated creativity somewhere."⁶

Rewriting Literary Criticism

Those who are familiar with the general tenor of Leavis's ideas know that to him the discipline of literary criticism ideally performs this creative function of the university. Leavis's phrases 'centre of consciousness', 'humane intelligence' or 'human responsibility for the civilized world,' may not require further elaboration in his own milieu of the 'scrutineers'. But in the context of the problems faced by our academics they are nebulous and perhaps not very relevant. In the same book from which the quotation is taken Leavis relates an unfortunate experience of political involvement (he voted for a Liberal candidate once!) which led him to the conclusion that he could never show his sense of political responsibility by believing in any party.

In the course of her studies Ellen Cantarow found that the academic establishment made every effort to keep literary studies uncontaminated by politics. She writes:

It also became clear to me that literature had been treated at Harvard—for example, at the perennial Common Room sherry parties—with arrogance. Discussions of literature were foppish, dilettantish, because they reduced literature to the cultural trappings of class privilege and professionalism. What feeling and passion, what social content, what suffering might have informed the poetry of a Brecht was dispelled in an instant by some pallid fop in a three-piece suit who, swirling brandy in a glass, talked in the throaty accents

peculiar to Harvard men about the latest edition of the *Hauspostille* as contrasted with the second edition.⁷

She rightly pleads for rewriting literary criticism as historical and cultural criticism and for a creation of intelligentsia a large part of which engages in active political work. But how many foundations are there in her country to finance this kind of subversive activity?

Bruce Franklin and Richard Ohmann discuss the New Criticism against the background of the depoliticizing and anti-communist academic activities in the forties and fifties. Bruce Franklin's experiences in the educational and military establishments of the USA lead him to the conclusion that the orientation of all the academic literary activity is essentially anti-communist. He points out in his paper "The Teaching of Literature in the Highest Academies of the Empire" that the anti-communist offensive in the postwar period was aimed at smashing the radical wing of the labour movement, at expanding the American empire and at developing and consolidating reactionary ideology. In performing the last function the faculties of the American universities vied with each other in purging their ranks of 'subversive' 'un-American' elements. He cites a resolution passed by the Assembly of the Academic Senate of the University of California way back in 1950: "No person whose commitments or obligations to any organization, communist or otherwise, prejudice impartial scholarship and free pursuit of truth will be employed by the university. Proved members of the Communist Party, by reason of such commitments to that party, are not acceptable as members of the faculty."⁸

Bruce Franklin correlates the consolidation of the New Criticism with the emergence of this anti-communist ideological political crusade. But now the contradictions of the American political and social structure have assumed such proportions that the formalist critical trends have been pushed to the background.

Pompous Mimics

Richard Ohmann in his paper "Teaching and Studying Literature at the End of Ideology" generously recognizes the positive contribution of the New Criticism to literary studies. But he points out how inept were many of the sophisticated literary intellectuals in discussing society because of their flight from politics. This point links his essay with Katherine Ellis's "Arnold's Other Axiom" in which she joins issue with the attempt of some modern critics to see the literatures of different ages as a simultaneous order existing beyond time. What she says about Ph D aspirants' efforts to imitate the professional style of the 'big people' is generally true about the pro-American depoliticized Indian scholars too: "[It] reminds me of the Indian petty officials in one of Orwell's stories of Burma, imitating the officious manners, the locutions and gestures of their British superiors, striving even to outdo them in polished eloquence as they attempt to deny the humiliating reality of their own class position

through scrupulous imitation of the 'cultural' diction of their masters."⁹

Lillian S Robinson, in an essay entitled "Who is Afraid of a Room of One's Own", discusses the inadequacies of women novelists' portrayal of men characters resulting from the commonly inherited and uncritically shared assumptions about women in a male-dominated society. The book also contains essays in applied linguistics by Barbara Bailey Kessel ("Free, Classless, and Urbane?"), William Labov ("The Logic of Nonstandard English"), and Wayne O'Neil ("The Politics of Bidialectalism") which effectively expose the upper-class bias of some of the linguistic doctrines. Florence Howe's "Why Teach Poetry?—An Experiment" is an illuminating essay which should serve as an eye-opener to those who complain about the non-response to poetry among their students. Martha Vicinus presents a case study in the analysis of nineteenth-century working-class poetry and pleads for extending the area of literature taught in the academies by including creative efforts and expressions of subculture groups.

The radical intelligentsia in this country should be vitally concerned with the outcome of the activities of their American colleagues, both in the political and in the academic fields. Two questions naturally arise in this connection: one political, and the other literary-historical. To what extent have the radical groups and the innumerable protest actions succeeded in amalgamating and crystallizing into a stable, enduring revolutionary nucleus capable of co-ordinating and directing the activities of the revolutionary movement? And, when will the radical literary intellectuals in the USA and the UK create a substantial corpus of literary historical and critical material reinterpreting and revaluating their great heritage to meet the requirements of a proletarian revolutionary movement? The progressive fulfilment of these tasks will enable Indian teachers to gain a revolutionary perspective on the English and American heritage which may make their exercises in the classroom more meaningful.

MOHAN THAMPI

¹ Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter (Eds), *The Politics of Literature*, New York 1973 p 4.

² Sisirkumar Ghose, *Modern and Otherwise*, Delhi 1975, p 188.

³ *The Politics of Literature*, p 308.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 97.

⁶ F R Leavis, *English Literature in Our Time and the University*, London 1969, p 3.

⁷ *The Politics of Literature*, pp 72-73.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 114.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 167.

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ASIA

A scholarly quarterly dedicated to providing
information and analysis relative to the liberation
struggles of Asia from a position firmly and unambiguously
in support of these struggles.

Editors: Malcolm Caldwell and Peter Limqueco

Annual subscription: £3 (in Indian subcontinent)

PO Box 49010, Stockholm 49, Sweden

INTERNATIONAL CASHEW TRADERS

POST BOX NO 37, QUILON

SOUTH INDIA

Leading exporters of
CASHEW KERNELS AND
CASHEW SHELL OIL

Members of
Association of Food Distributors Inc., New York

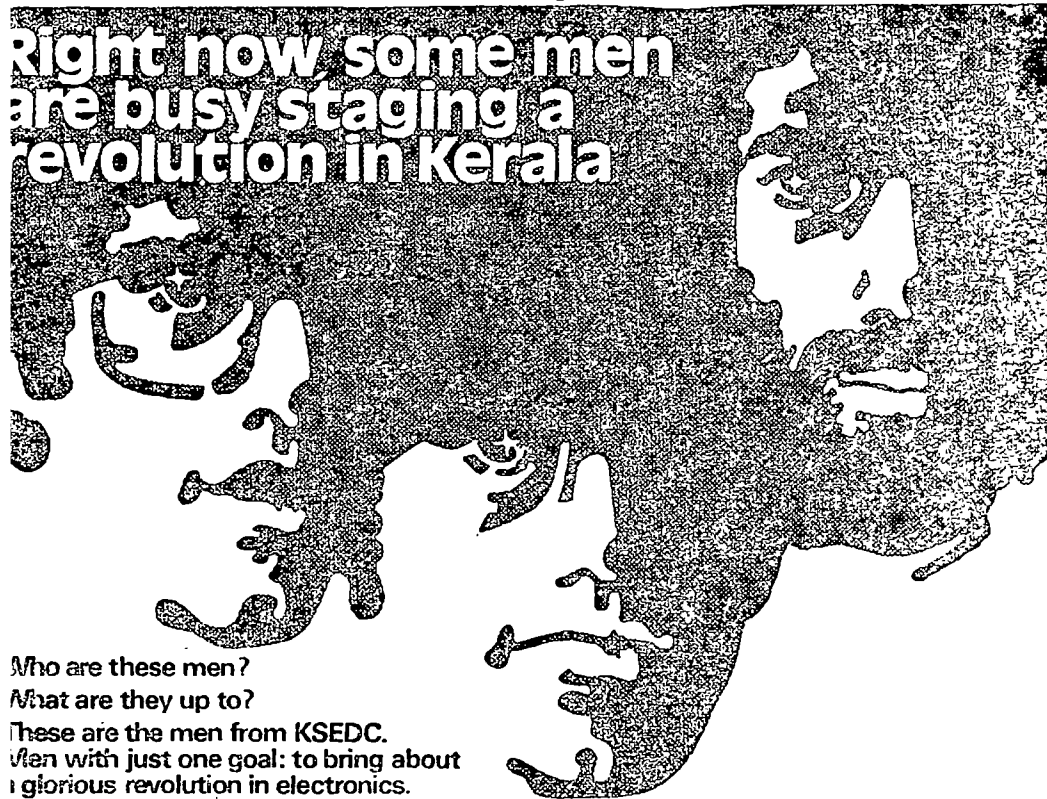
Telegram: 'INTERLOCK'

Telex : BALCO, QL-221

Telephones Off : { 3381
2604
3380

Res : { 4673
2009
2298

Right now some men are busy staging a revolution in Kerala



Who are these men?

What are they up to?

These are the men from KSEDC.

**Men with just one goal: to bring about
a glorious revolution in electronics.**

Their triumphs

- On the day of the inauguration they signed an agreement to manufacture 5,000 solid-state TV sets annually for ECIL
- Five months and fifteen days later, on February 15, 1974, they handed over the first TV set. And had developed: a closed circuit TV system, electronic cash register, pocket and desk calculators, high power static inverters—all within this short time.
- Set up a Central Marketing Organisation to market not only their own products, but also those of associate and outside companies — provided these match technical specifications and quality standards laid down by the Corporation
- And were ready to go into production with Thyristorised DC drives, uninterruptible power supply systems, static relays for power system applications, DC magnetisers, cine projectors, speakers and custom-built electronic systems

Their future programme

- This includes the manufacture of:
- 27 million Electrolytic and Monolithic Capacitors in collaboration with Sprague Electromag of Belgium.
 - 20 million Ceramic Capacitors in collaboration with the National Research Development Corporation.
 - Piezo-electric Crystals, developed with their own know-how, by July 1975

Their objectives

- To accelerate the growth of the electronics industry by designing and manufacturing application

intensive, electronic equipment and systems

- To offer technical, financial and marketing support to enterprising entrepreneurs, who will contribute further to the overall growth of the electronics industry

Their platform

The rapid progress, made by KSEDC, is a direct result of its policy of appointing technical persons in key positions. Right from the policy-making to the shop-floor levels. And it is this far-sighted policy that will help them achieve their objectives.

**Kerala State Electronics
Development Corporation Limited—
spearheading the revolution in electronics**

KELTRON

“Our Co-operative Greetings”

to the *Social Scientist*, Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences.

The Trivandrum District Co-operative Bank Ltd.

Central financing agency for the co-operatives in the
district—with branches throughout the district.

All banking business transacted.

Offers higher rates of interest on deposits.

“MAY ALL BE FREE FROM DISEASES”

Kerala State Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited

Entered the field of manufacture of drugs and
pharmaceuticals in September 1974. Having
made long strides, they now look forward with
expectations to their forthcoming expansion schemes
that include manufacture of basic drugs.

Kerala State Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited

Alleppey

A subsidiary of

Kerala State Industrial Enterprises Limited

Trivandrum-3.



VAIDYARATNAM P.S. VARIER'S
ARYA VAIDYA SALA

Pioneers in Ayurveda
KOTTAKKAL
(Kerala State) Estd. 1902

Phones: Head Office 31, Nursing Home 44, Chief Physician 25, Managing Trustee 61 (Office) 27 (Residence)

Branches at :

Madras (Phone : 666226), Kozhikode (72155), Palghat (3104), Erode (3172), Tirur (231), Ernakulam (33026), Alwaye (549) and Trivandrum (62349) and over 150 authorized agencies and depots.

Genuine standard Ayurvedic medicines and expert medical advice are available at the Head Office at Kottakkal and all branches, depots and agencies. Medical advice through correspondence is given by the Chief Physician at Kottakkal.

Special treatments like Pizhichil, Navarakkizhi etc., are conducted under the supervision of the Chief Physician at the Golden Jubilee Nursing Home, Kottakkal. Please reserve your rooms in advance and come only after getting confirmation.

Persons desiring to consult the Chief Physician are requested to come only after fixing an appointment in advance.

MANAGING TRUSTEE

UNITED ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES LTD., QUILON

(A Kerala Government Company)

OFFERS

'UNILEC'

KWH Single Phase Meters
KWH Polyphase Meters
Oil-immersed Star-Delta Starters
Oil-immersed Combined Stator-Rotor Starters
Oil-immersed Auto-Transformer Starters
Direct on line Push Button Starters
Air Break Star-Delta Starters
SWITCHGEAR - LT and 11 KV
Electronic Items

For All Kinds of Medicines

Contact

RAMU'S MEDICAL SUPPLIES

&

MOSMINA ENTERPRISES

Pharmaceutical distributors & stockists
for Roche, M.S.D. (Voltas P.C.P.)
Parke - Davis, East India Pharmaceutical Works Ltd
Boehringer-Knoll Ltd
Boots Company

Vadayattukotta, Quilon

Phones :
Office : 3388
Residence : 4028

LAKSHMAN & CO

Cashew Processors, Exporters & Importers

QUILON - 4 S. INDIA

TELEPHONES: OFFICE: { 2784 RES: { 2750
3247 3005

TELEGRAM : **LASHCO, QUILON**

TELEX { STATION CODE : 088
LASHCO, QN : 234

Codes Used :

BENTLEY'S SECOND PHRASE & PRIVATE

Social Scientist

SPECIAL NUMBER ON WOMEN

There shall be no *Social Scientist* next month. Instead, a combined issue for November-December will be brought out around Christmas, centred on the changing role of women in the economic, social and political spheres of national life.

Priced at Rs. 5 for a single copy, the special number will be sent to all subscribers who have paid up to December.

Agents are reminded that they should intimate their requirements over and above usual quotas, by November 20.

Advertisement matter should reach us by first week of December at the latest.

Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1.

INDIAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

27-29 DECEMBER 1975

TRIVANDRUM

The highlights of the programme are

27 December : 6 p.m. Inauguration by
Captain (Dr) Lakshmi Sahgal

28 and 29 : Plenary sessions and group
discussions

29 December : 6 p.m. Concluding session

More than a hundred delegates from universities and organizations in India and abroad are expected to participate.

Participants who intend to present papers at the conference are requested to send them in advance, at the latest by 15 December, to enable us to schedule the plenary sessions.

Those who want to take part in the All India Conference should immediately write to Dr Jacob Eapen, Indian School of Social Sciences, Trivandrum-1.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 9 APRIL 1975
Samuelson's Marx-kritik: *J E King*; Problems of Indian history: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Origin and development of Islam: *Asghar Ali Engineer*; Student leadership in Lucknow: *Rashid Ali Syed*; Notes on: Mathematical methods in international relations analysis; Property rights under the Constitution.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10 MAY 1975
Politics of psychoanalysis: *S C Varma*; Political economy of food, Part I: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Herostone worship in ancient south India: *N Vanamamalai*; Student movement at JNU: *Prakash Karat*; Note on transnational monopolies.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 11 JUNE 1975
Studies in the development of Indian capitalism: *N Ram*; Political economy of food, Part II: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Jaya Prakash Narayan's politics: *S C Varma*; Notes on: Marxism and Indian sociology; The national sector and commanding heights; Communication on Marxism and quantum mechanics.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 12 JULY 1975
China and the undivided Communist Party of India: *Georges Kristoffel Lieten*; Sociology of conflict theory: *Manorama Savur*; Revolutionary violence in a people's war: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Note on foreign monopolies and the Indian drug industry; Communication on Marx, Samuelson and King.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1 AUGUST 1975
Theoretical aspects of the national question: *Prakash Karat*; Emergence of nationalism: *Irfan Habib*; National problems in India and pre-revolutionary Russia: *Ajit Roy*; Class character of the nationalist movement: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Regional development and the national question in north-east India: *S K Chaube*, *S Munsri* and *A Guha*; Rise and growth of the Bengali nationality: *Purtha Chatterjee*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER 1975. South-east Asia—thirty years on: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Assam's language question in retrospect: *M Kar*; Sonthal problem in nineteenth-century Bengal: *Archana Mandal*; Report on: Christians for socialism; Notes on: Desabhimani study circles in Kerala; Medical representatives on the march.

Social Scientist

SPECIAL NUMBER

40-41

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1975

Perspective of the Women's Movement
Origins ☐ **Liberation and Pro**
☐ **Female-headed Family** ☐ **Literacy**
ing Women ☐ **Office Workers** ☐
Wages ☐ **Women's Status in**

ON WOMEN

Social Scientist

Editor

Jacob Eapen

Associate Editors

Mohan Thampi

P N Varughese

Editorial & Circulation

SOCIAL SCIENTIST

Indian School of Social Sciences

Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15
Single Copy : Rs 3

FOREIGN

(In US dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11

Air Mail : Annual \$ 20 (USA & Canada)

\$ 17 (Other countries)

(In pounds sterling)

£ 4.50

£ 6.00

RUPEES FIVE

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 4 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
NUMBER 4/5 1975

CONTENTS

E M S Namboodiripad	1	Perspective of the Women's Movement
Manorama Savur	9	Women's Liberation and Productive Activity
Carol A Brown	28	Patriarchal, Capitalism and the Female-headed Family
Gail Omvedt	40	Rural Origins of Women's Liberation in India
Martin Oppenheimer	55	Women Office Workers: Petty-bourgeoisie or New Proletarians?
Mythily Shivaraman	76	Towards Emancipation
Kumaresh Chakravarty	104	Employment, Incomes and Equality
Sophie M Tharakan	115	Status of Women in India: A Historical Perspective
Michael Tharakan		
Wandana Sonalkar	124	Problems of Working Women in Urban Areas
Aleyamma George	134	Literacy: Doorway to Liberation
Vimla Randive	146	Working-class Women
Leela Gulati	155	Sex Discrimination in Work and Wages

Articles express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr CAROL A BROWN is assistant professor in the department of urban studies, Queens College, City University of New York.

KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY is in the department of Bengali, Delhi College, University of Delhi.

Dr ALEYAMMA GEORGE is professor and head of the department of statistics, University of Kerala.

LEELA GULATI is an economic analyst in Trivandrum.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD is member of the Polit Bureau, Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Dr GAIL OMVEDT is assistant professor of sociology, University of California (San Diego).

Dr MARTIN OPPENHEIMER is associate professor and chairperson of the department of sociology, Livingston College, Rutgers University.

VIMLA RANDIVE is secretary of the All India Plantation Workers' Federation.

Dr MANORAMA SAVUR teaches sociology at the University of Bombay.

MYTHILY SHIVARAMAN is vice-president of Tamil Nadu Democratic Women's Association.

WANDANA SONALKAR is a research fellow with Shankar Brahme Samaj Vidnyana Granthalaya, Poona.

MICHAEL THARAKAN is at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.

SOPHIE M THARAKAN is in the department of English, St Mary's College (Trichur), University of Calicut.

E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD

Perspective of the Women's Movement

MORE THAN a century and a half ago, an incident took place in Bengal which throws revealing light on the women's problems in India. The reference here is to the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's brother, following which the widow became 'sati'. A biographer of the great social reformer narrates the incident as follows:

It is said that Ram Mohan had endeavoured to persuade her beforehand against this terrible step, but in vain. When, however, she felt the flames she tried to get up and escape from the pile; but her orthodox relations and the priests forced her down with bamboo poles, and kept her there to die, while drums and brazen instruments were loudly sounded to drown her shrieks. Ram Mohan, unable to save her, and filled with unspeakable indignation and pity, vowed within himself then and there, that he would never rest until the atrocious custom was rooted out. And he kept his vow. Before 19 years had fully elapsed, that pledge was redeemed by the Government decree abolishing sati on December 4, 1829.¹

Some of us may think that this is past history, never to return. Unfortunately however, in this very year of grace 1975, which is observed throughout the world as the International Women's Year, at least 2 cases of sati have been reported from north India. As in the case of the widow

of the great social reformer's brother, these widows too were forced by their relatives to immolate themselves in the pyres of their husbands.

Unlike in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, of course, sati is recognized as a crime today and the persons concerned were duly arrested and proceeded against. It is however shocking that 146 years after the abominable custom was declared illegal by the then British government, the practice is still continuing in parts of a country over whose government a distinguished lady is presiding. No more graphic an example is necessary to show the extent to which tradition harasses, humiliates and oppresses the women in this country of whose "ancient heritage" so much is proudly claimed by our misguided "patriots".

Social Reforms Movement

Striking a personal note and recalling the conditions of the women of the community I was born into, polygamous marriages were the rule and bigamy the exception half a century ago. My own father had two wives, while only one of his five daughters who grew up to the age of marriage escaped the fate of being one of two or more wives of their husbands. My stepmother, the younger of the two wives of my father, was the daughter of the "bridegroom" to whom my father's younger sister was married! This was true also of every family related to ours as well as the entire community, the only modification being that, instead of two wives as in my father's case, most men had three.

Combined as this was with enforced widowhood, the husbands having innumerable concubines over and above the two or three lawfully wedded wives, the absence of education for the women, observance of *pardah* and other customs of half-a-century ago roused my social conscience. The campaign against these outmoded practices launched by my elders was in fact what initiated me into the service of the people.

The social reform movement launched by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, as is well known, stirred the conscience of successive generations all over India. Step by step it flowered into the movement for the allround (social, cultural and economic) reconstruction of Indian society and finally developed into the political movement for freedom. The social reform (including the women's liberation) movement and the struggle for India's freedom from the foreign yoke were thus interrelated, strengthening each other. Although there were many social reformers who looked down upon the struggle for political freedom, and although conversely there were several fighters for political freedom who were hostile to social reforms, the fact remains that every advance in the movement for political freedom brought India's womanhood several steps further in their own struggle for emancipation. Organized womanhood on the other hand has always been a tower of strength for the freedom movement.

Subsequently, when the freedom movement embraced the organized working class and the rural poor and with the emergence of the socialist, the communist and other left democratic forces within the womb of the

freedom movement, the struggle for women's liberation received a great fillip, widening and deepening it still more. In other words, the general democratic socialist and working-class movement is so integrated with the movement for women's liberation that if either of them has to advance both have to advance simultaneously and in mutual cooperation.

Let us recall in this context, that along with the sessions of the Indian National Congress and its provincial, district or local conferences were often held social reform conferences in general, or women's conferences in particular. So too, when left-wing movements, socialist groups and parties, trade unions and other mass organizations began to take shape, special efforts were made to draw women into their ranks. These organizations fighting for peoples' advance in the direction of general democracy or socialism therefore included in their programmatic pronouncements several items intended to emancipate India's womanhood from its age-old suffering.

It was this that enabled the organized women's movement, and the general movement for social reforms, to get social legislation enacted even in the days of British rule. Prohibition of sati in 1829 was followed by several other measures enabling more and more women to get education, permitting widows to remarry, putting such restrictions on the age of marriage as to end the system of child marriage and so on. This process was naturally accelerated after the British quit India and a national government was established.

Dimensions of Struggle

But even 28 years after the British left, there are today many remnants of the age-old order under which the woman should, according to Hindu Dharma, be "obedient to her father in childhood, to her husband in her youth and to her son in old age; never is she free". The reasons are two: firstly, after the enactment of several reform laws embracing marriage, inheritance and other aspects of family life, the legal equality between man and woman is still incomplete. The position of Hindu women is slightly better than their Muslim and Christian sisters, since the "minority rights" recognized in the constitution are so interpreted that enactment of laws regarding property, inheritance and other traditional inveteracies of non-Hindu communities are beyond the pale of the state. But even in relation to Hindu women, it is well known that there are several gaps to be filled if there should be complete equality between the two sexes.

Secondly, even in several cases where a more or less satisfactory law has been put on the statute book, the force of tradition and several other factors (including the economic factor) reduce the law to a dead letter. The scandalous violation of the technically valid anti-dowry legislation, like the violations of the anti-untouchability and several other social reform legislations, shows that, in the absence of powerful movements to get them enforced social reform legislation will be made innocuous by vested interests.

Let me take a recent example that comes from my home state. The Law Minister of Kerala made an announcement about two months ago that the law concerning the inheritance among Christians is being so amended as to give equal right to the male and female children of the father. A hue and cry was raised against it since, it was stated, the father has, in any case to incur the expenditure of marriage, including huge sums to be paid as dowry. It will be unbearable for him if he were to incur this huge expenditure and, on top of that, equal shares are given to the daughters. Even those who are not opposed in principle to equality of right to property among the sons and daughters point out that in practice (so long as the payment of dowry continues to be obligatory even though it has been prohibited in law) it will be virtually impossible for the fathers to bear the double burden.

It is therefore clear that, if society is to be modernized, if Hindu, Muslim, Christian and other women—even among the Hindus those following the *Mithakshara*, *Dayabhaga* and several other systems—are to be enabled to enjoy the privileges of a modern monogamous family having equal rights with men, the struggle of the women as women should be further carried forward. That women as an integral part of the toiling classes—the working class, the peasantry—should therefore participate with men in all these movements is also undeniable. This however should not be allowed to stand in the way of sustained activity, among women, and as women, for social equality with men.

New Forms of Bondage

Indian women however are facing another set of problems which too is connected with the struggle for modernization of society. These problems in fact have arisen precisely because Indian society has for a century and a half, been in the process of modernization. The result is that more and more women are being educated, greater opportunities for securing independent jobs are afforded, legal rights to property are recognized and marriage life is being freed from the age-old restrictions. These, however, are transforming Indian society in the direction of capitalist development which means, for women, that in place of old forms of subjection, new forms are rising; old chains are broken—that too partly—to be replaced by new chains.

Abundant material has been given in the publications of the trade unions and other democratic organizations of the working people on the problems of employment; wages and working conditions; rent, debt, tax and other liabilities; rocketing prices of essential consumer goods as well as of all inputs of production. What requires emphasis is that, in relation to every one of these problems affecting all sections of the working people, the women among them are in a still more disadvantageous position than their menfolk.

Women are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. They are obliged in most sectors of employment to do the same work as their men-

PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

folk for lower remuneration. After doing the day's work in the factories, offices or fields, they have to go back only to undertake the gruelling jobs of looking after their homes. Above all, substantial numbers of women have to humiliate themselves before their bosses, be harassed and insulted on their way to and back from the workplace, besides being constantly in fear of molestation from rowdy elements only because they are women.

The abominable treatment given in capitalist society to womanhood was graphically described by Marx and Engels in their classical work, the *Communist Manifesto*: The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed correlation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, as all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.²

Aiming well-directed arrows of sarcasm against those who would have the people believe that the communists would "introduce community of women", the authors of the *Manifesto* went on:

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system i.e. to prostitution both public and private.³

Overcoming Obstacles to Equality

This is the society towards which men and women are in the process of being "modernized". To the extent to which the age-old, caste-ridden social institutions are being reformed and a new capitalist society is emerging, new chains of slavery are being foisted on the women of India, along with their menfolk of course. As we have noted above even the old chains of the antiquated Hindu society have not been completely broken. On top of them however have been imposed new restrictions and new burdens. Although apparently different from, and lighter than such institutions as sati, enforced widowhood, polygamous marriage and purdah the new chains are equally painful and suffocating to our women. Organizations dedicated to the cause of social reform in general, and women's organizations in particular, have therefore to carry on a simultaneous struggle against the old as well as the new chains of slavery which our women have to bear.

In carrying on this struggle they have to overcome the obstacles placed in their path by different socio-economic and cultural forces which strengthen the man's domination over the woman. It is not necessary to go over them in detail. It is enough to underline the fact that, even among those who appear to be and may in reality be sincere in their

professions regarding women's emancipation, the sub-conscious attitude of masculine superiority is very much in operation. Progressive and revolutionary organizations and parties do very often contain in their ranks elements which are hostile to any genuine movement for the complete equality of men and women. It is therefore necessary for every individual and organization, which considers itself dedicated to the struggle for women's emancipation, to carry on a sustained, conscious struggle against even the slightest trace of masculine superiority over the women.

Equally if not more important is the struggle for a scientifically correct, balanced view of the relation between the sufferings and hardships of women as women and the oppression and exploitation to which the working people as a whole—men as well as women—are subjected. For, every additional burden put on the shoulders of working women as women is, at the same time, part of the burden shared by the male as well as female workers.

Equal wage for equal work between men and women among the workers and middle-class employees, for instance, not only raises the status of the women in society, but directly adds to the joint income of the whole family. This is of course conditional on guaranteed employment, ensuring that women are not thrown out of jobs because they have to be paid at the same rate as men. Jobs for women, equality of wages, a general raising of the level of wages and working conditions—these therefore are the common demands. Equality of women with men in matters like education, marriage and inheritance would also help the family to improve its living standards. Improvement in the conditions of working women would, in other words, lead to a lessening of the economic burdens on the male "bread winner" and make for a happier family life. The entire working class, the working people at large, should therefore join the women in their struggle for equality with their menfolk. Every trade union, kisan sabha, and agricultural labour organization should not only formally put it in their written programme, but organize practical action for the realization of equality of the sexes.

The Perspective

The organizations of women too should realize that their own struggle for equality can be led to successful conclusion only if the common organizations of the working people are strengthened and if they embrace in their ranks both men and women. For, what they are up against is the oppression and exploitation to which all the working people have been and continue to be subjected under the developing capitalist society, superimposed as it is on the humiliation, oppression and exploitation which has been the lot of the untouchables, the other 'lower' castes and women in India ever since the *varna*-caste society was established on the ruins of the pre-historic tribal society. It is against these two forms of class society—precapitalist with its caste, communal and tribal institutions which have only been undermined, not destroyed, by developing capitalism; the

growing capitalist society with a small stratum of monopoly capitalists — allied to landlords and collaborating with imperialism—that the Indian people have been fighting and go on fighting. The successful culmination of this struggle would lead to the formation of a people's democratic state which, in its turn, would lay the basis for the establishment of socialist society, passing finally into Communism.

Such is the perspective with which the democratic movement in general and the women's movement in particular have to advance. Uncompromising struggle against the precapitalist institutions of the caste, communal and tribal institutions; the completion of the rural people's struggle against landlord domination; full modernization of the entire economy, leading to rapid industrialization and giving employment to all able-bodied persons (men and women); energetic measures against all reactionary, obscurantist beliefs and institutions—these are the prerequisites for completely emancipating our womanhood.

Working for such a real integration of the movement for the women's emancipation and the joint movement for democracy and socialism we have to carry on a relentless struggle as much against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois 'feminism' as against male chauvinism. The one (male chauvinism) is direct looking down upon any movement for genuine equality between men and women and is therefore clearly visible to everybody. The other however appears on the surface to be more 'radical'; it adopts a 'leftist' and 'revolutionary' garb; it is therefore even more dangerous to the integration of the women's movement for their equality with men, and the common movement of the working people for ending all forms of precapitalist exploitation and, along with it, liquidating capitalism. In his well-known talk with Clara Zetkin, Lenin brought the issue into the correct perspective, pointing out how the struggle for women's equality is part of the revolutionary class struggle which the working people have to wage, the struggle which culminates in the division of society into an exploiting and exploited class.

Just as in Lenin's day, so now, all sorts of nonclass 'leftist' slogans and movements are around us. Suggestions are made in some such 'left' circles that the aim of any movement for women's equality should be the elimination of the family. Apparently 'radical' ideas are set forth that the biological requirements of sex can be met in innumerable ways other than the marriage and the family; the problem of bringing up children too, it is suggested, can be solved through the organization of what are called 'baby farms' which would free the women from the labours of motherhood. The question is naively asked: Is it not possible for science to device ways and means of modernizing the process of child birth and upbringing?

One cannot foresee now what will be the type of relations that will subsist between men and women when the present class society is made to give place to a new classless society. That will be known only

when a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in all their lives have had occasion to purchase a woman's surrender either for money or with any other means of social power, and of women who have never been obliged to surrender to any man out of any consideration other than that of real love, or to refrain from giving themselves to their beloved for fear of the economic consequences.⁴

One need not therefore rack one's brains on what the state of the man-woman relationship would be in future India. The point now is to see that our generation dedicates itself to the job of preparing the conditions in which the new generation of the type envisaged by Engels can grow up, that is, develop the movement for people's democracy, leading to the emergence of socialism and finally communism. It is to this end that the women's movement in particular and the social reform movement in general have to address themselves.

¹ S A Collett, *The Life and Letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, 1962, pp 33-34.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, *Selected Works* Progress Publishers, Moscow.

³ *Ibid.* pp 50-51.

⁴ Frederick Engels, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* Vol III, Moscow.

MANORAMA SAVUR

Women's Liberation And Productive Activity

To effect her (woman's) complete emancipation and make her the equal of the man, it is necessary for the national economy to be socialized and for women to participate in common productive labour.

V I LENIN

THE STRUGGLE for women's liberation *per se* arises only in a class society. It holds no relevance in a primitive subsistence level society, nor in a future classless society of plenty. Today a large part of the world has class societies, where due to uneven development, women as workers are relatively more exploited than men at almost all levels. Further, due to patriarchal traditions or its influence, oppression of women is projected even in the household. Struggles by women for their rights become imperative.¹ But they can be rendered either pernicious if levelled against all men, regardless of class, as is often the case in the west; or turn futile and even self-defeating if initiated from above as in the case of India.

The United Nations, an imperialist-controlled organization, declared 1975 as the Women's International Year.² The Third World faithfully fell in line with it. The declaration was a mere ritual and was in no sense intended to initiate a fresh movement for women's liberation. On the contrary, it was a reaction to the growing power of a widespread movement started by American women in the late sixties and rapidly spreading in Europe. One must note that sociologically, the major function of a ritual is to buttress the status quo. The status quo in western capitalist countries was not threatened by the local proletariat which had been 'appeased' and safely 'promoted', at least for the present, to the rank

of labour aristocracy. The bourgeoisie to some extent shared with the male white (local) labour force a small part of the surplus accumulated not only from exploiting the Third World but also by underpayment of wages to the growing labour force of minority races and women. This form of surplus value is indispensable for the functioning of even a developed capitalist economy. Women joined the labour force to produce commodities for the capitalist market, but continued to be housewives. As housewife a woman provides free labour in her household and is said to have indirectly contributed to the production of capital—though not directly to surplus value.³ This double burden has almost broken her back, but simultaneously built a new consciousness in the western woman.

Marginal Jobs

In this article we are only concerned with the mode of utilization of female labour, in the "first" and the "third"⁴ worlds for appropriation of surplus value and the forms of exploitation, mainly of two kinds: one, by marked wage differentials, done blatantly at all levels even in the most advanced countries like the U S A; and second, by utilizing women as a reserve army of labour (either for increasing production as and when additional labour force is necessary during war and capitalist expansion or for creating structural unemployment during periods of full employment to break the bargaining power and potential of labour movements). European women trade unionists in close touch with the working class are acutely conscious that women form no more than "a safety valve for labour market,"⁵ and today their position is precarious when recession is threatening.⁶ A built-in structural bias in the system of education⁷ combined with a suitable ideology is made to operate in such a way as to make a woman's job both "economically and technologically marginal."⁸ This is also achieved by feminization and masculinization of available jobs.

We have to consider factors which have made women marginal in the labour market. Recessions are a constant threat to the capitalist societies as well as to the Third World. Capitalist societies are also "dominantly" patriarchal in ideology. As recession hits employment, ground has to be prepared for all eventualities. The bourgeoisie, therefore, has revived the ideology that it is unnatural for women to work when men are idle. A number of Third World countries have both patriarchal and matrilineal traditions; such historical facts are irrelevant when the two worlds are linked and one is dependent on the other. Yet one must remember that the industrial bourgeoisie, at the height of Industrial Revolution in England, did not hesitate to snatch children from their cradles and put them to work along with their mothers at low wages, and deliberately left the men idle and unemployed. Ideology⁹ and the necessity for primitive accumulation do not necessarily coincide. This is further confirmed by their action in the colonies.

During Colonial Expansion

In the period of imperialist expansion, the bourgeoisie utilized the

women in the colonies to depress wages to the lowest possible level. In India, for instance, whole families were "recruited" or to be more precise, enticed into plantations with the help of labour contractors and reduced to the status of indentured labour. The logic behind this move was: if the whole family was put to work, the total wages earned would add up to subsistence wages that a man alone need earn to support his family—the bourgeois "norm" was conveniently ignored.

The game played in Africa was somewhat different. It was a dual one, particularly in those areas where women were predominantly engaged in agriculture and men in hunting. In certain areas all able-bodied men were hounded into mines, plantations and industries to provide cheap labour. The wages were maintained far below subsistence because African women carried out all the agricultural operations and supported the whole family.¹⁰ The imperialists had again forgotten the sanctity assigned to the family by the Victorian age, and mercilessly separated the men and women.¹¹ This was a mere physical separation in comparison with separation of interest and antagonism created elsewhere. In certain other areas European agents forced the men to grow cash crops for export. To be profitable export production must grow. African men were taught modern techniques of agriculture¹² but they took little interest in agriculture in spite of the fact that the women used not only primitive but wasteful slash-and-burn techniques to grow food crops. In other words, imperialists not only perpetuated the state of under-development, but also disrupted the pattern of relations between the sexes and created antagonism. As the men were not agriculturists by tradition, they had no land to grow cash crops for their "masters". The masters, therefore, again played a trick on the women. In the precolonial system land under cultivation used to pass in female line of inheritance. The colonialists introduced a new law by which only registered land could be inherited; therefore, much of the fallow land which was left unregistered passed into the hands of the men, where they were compelled to plant rubber for the export market. It was a cash crop and earned money, thereby they stole a march over the women.

Out of Wars and Revolutions

To come back to the main theme of productive activity of women, those from the lower classes have always participated in it and therefore are referred to as working classes. The two imperialist wars, however, gave upper and middle class women also an opportunity to come out of their homes and participate in productive activity, which for the first time made them fully conscious of their ability and potential power. Gainful employment also gave women a degree of freedom. Freedom for all is dangerous in a class society. But war had decimated the male population in large parts of the world and the need for a labour force gave these women a further opportunity to continue to work. When the postwar expansion and boom combined with inflation in western capitalist countries,

gainful occupation for women in these countries became a necessity. But continued discrimination in wages and the marginal nature of their employment led to numerous feminist movements. An articulate section of the women however, continued to insist right from the late sixties that women's liberation can come only with socialist revolution.¹³ In other words, they pointed out that the major contradiction in the capitalist society is not sex but class. The bourgeoisie smelt danger in the socialist feminist call, and in order to divide the ranks of the potential combined revolutionary forces, injected the idea¹⁴ of war of the sexes which would be a major diversion from potential class war. This culminated in the ritual namely, the declaration of women's international year.

It must be noted that apart from the uppermost section of the native population (compradors and collaborators, the hirelings who constitute a small minority¹⁵) the imperialist wars also gave the large mass of colonial people so far suppressed a similar opportunity to work in all sectors of the economy, in positions of responsibility rather than as mere slaves who had so far almost blindly obeyed orders. This also resulted in the development of a new consciousness, a political one, that expressed itself not in feminist movements and war between the sexes, but a war where men and women together fought their major enemy, the imperialist powers. In these areas where liberation was matured successfully into revolution, women have largely emancipated themselves from a secondary position in their societies. None claims liberation of these women is complete. The past traditions cannot be wiped out in a decade or two. This process, like all revolutionary processes is an ongoing one. But, the process is not as bitter as in the other two worlds, as women participate as much in productive activity as men and the communist ideology gives further strength to their movement.

India Joins the Ritual

There are however, other parts of Third World, where "national liberation" has meant nothing more than formal independence. In the quest for a multitudinous following, the middle class leadership drew women of all classes into the national movement. But once independence was declared the leadership had no more use for them and relegated them to the background. In India discrimination continues even in government actions, that is, in the disparity between policy statements and actual implementation. Discriminations are apparent in wages in certain sectors, falling rate of employment in the organized sector and in numerous other intangible factors, for instance even in the definition of a worker in the 1971 census. By its definition, 2.3 million women workers are classified as non-workers, although they are economically active. This is achieved by separating them from men who are formally classified according to their "main activity". One should also take note of the brazen question asked by the National Council of Labour. Differentiating between the condition of full employment of women and surplus labour available in

India it asks: Is it fair then to employ women? It then goes on to argue that since the wages of men are extremely low, women should join the labour force to supplement their income, "when social convention do not weigh oppressively against" such a practice.¹⁶

India chose to join in the ritual by celebrating 1975 as Women's International Year. A clear distinction has to be made between the various forms the ritual takes and the empirical reality. One has to take into consideration the role of ideology and its interaction with reality. Ideology is partly a byproduct of the ritual. Ideology is particularly emphasized in this paper, not because it is more important than the real situation, but because of the dangerous implications which are generally ignored.

From the ritual point of view, the Government of India did not lag behind U N. It set up a Status of Women's Committee in September, 1971, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare at a cost of nearly Rs 1,000,000¹⁷. The Committee may be impressive by its membership of wives of powerful political leaders and ministers, with a solitary trade unionist and an academic thrown in to give some variety—but not spice. The money was being spent, but when no results were forthcoming the Indian Council of Social Science Research was commandeered to come to the committee's rescue. It brought out 77 studies which were funded from ICSSR's own budget¹⁸. Evidently, one million rupees had already been squandered by the high-powered Committee.

Middle-class Ideology

One must take note of the class character of the women, namely, middle class, who were drawn in by the ICSSR to do 'intellectual' work on the women of India. Most of them already had to their credit some work done in this area but which was almost wholly confined to the middle-class women's problems.¹⁹ Their work therefore does not portray the conditions of a large majority belonging to the working classes whose problems are more intense and in a sense different from those of the middle class. Typically of the Third World, the middle classes constitute no more than a statistical minority,²⁰ and they work mainly in the tertiary sector of the economy.

The middle-class women writers create a dangerous ideology. Their writings if taken seriously, and put into action, run against all possibility of liberation of the lower class women who participate directly in some productive activity or take up gainful employment, which is necessary even for their very survival.

The commonest theme taken up is "women's two roles" or "role conflict" a bourgeois product, perhaps picked up from Alva Myrdal and overworked. Apart from being ahistorical, these writers have unquestioningly identified women with home and men with "bread winning" activity. Following this major premise women's right to participate in productive activity is assigned merely a secondary place. Women's right,

particularly of the lower classes to work, is not denied. It cannot be. That is a dangerous position for them to take in a class society. A "concession" is therefore made. A woman is expected to work outside her home in order to augment the family income. None dare deny the boredom involved in mere house work, and illogically (from the point of view of their major premise) go to the extent of saying: Work outside the house is rewarding not only in a monetary sense, but also for enrichment of one's personality. They again ignore the nature and type of work that falls to the lot of lower-class women (who constitute the majority among the working women) which enriches neither their purse nor their personality.

Incidentally, one must take note of the double standards of the middle-class women writers. They have not hesitated to liberate themselves by reversing their own position regarding the primary and secondary roles that they have so glibly assigned to other women. Whatever lip sympathy they may pay to the sanctity of women's place in the home they have taken to gainful employment outside their own homes,²¹ and relegated the sacred domestic duties to paid servants.

Family Responsibility

The role conflict between employment and the burden of household responsibility falls very heavily only on that small section of women, from lower middle and lower class women who are in a position to send their children to school by augmenting the family income by taking up gainful employment but have no domestic help. Yet none of the middle-class writers have learned to argue, as atleast the European women trade unionists have, for a more equitable distribution of family responsibility²² and equal and fair chances for women to work,²³ as an immediate measure of relief. These writers however lament males outnumbering females in rate of literacy, higher school dropout among girls than among boys, and lack of opportunity of technical training for girls²⁴—as though education *per se* would resolve the problem and the nature of employment. None of them sees the problem as essentially structural. In the Third World, the wage rates are so low (apart from the intermittent nature of employment opportunity), and the inflationary pressures so high, that every pair of hands has to do work to contribute to the family income to reach up atleast to the subsistence level. Since the wages of an adult is higher than that of a child, it is but logical that an adult woman takes up employment, while household work and child care which fetches no money income, is passed on to somewhat older children (anywhere after the age of six) irrespective of their sex. Since genetically a girl matures faster than a boy of the same age, the responsibility falls more heavily on her than on a boy, which accounts for the real differential rate of "education," and not on the so called outdated attitudes and ignorance of the working class parents.²⁵

All this is not to imply that a working class woman is freed from

the tasks of her house-hold work. It falls upon her very heavily during the periods of her unemployment. In other words one should also note that it falls on her at a very tender age, even before she reaches womanhood. The nature of house-hold work in the Third World is not elaborate but arduous like fetching gallons of water. In the countryside, even fuel has to be collected and the raw foodgrain processed. In the town one has a different set of problems like waiting in the long shop-queues and bringing water from the common tap. Generally in the working class, the burden falls on women and children more heavily than on men in those areas where the patriarchal tradition dominates. Where such traditions do not exist they are "borrowed" by the beneficiary (the man) or even subtly inculcated by others (the employers) who benefit by dividing the ranks of the working class.

Subemployment

Granted that the middle-class women writers are not crusading against their own sex, they do it only for one class of women, namely, their own. In their case, it is not the sex, but class interest that operates more strongly. The objective fact of being caught in the grip of rising inflation has to be taken into account. The writers may not themselves be employers of women on a large scale, but they still opt for cheap labour either men or women. Their concern for members of their own sex recedes into the background. What looms large is: the petty need for cheap domestic service combined with the general fear of wage-push theory of inflation.

Again, these writers have no solid ground to base their analysis. Generally they clamour loudly for 'change of attitude', a term borrowed loosely from psychology but not from sociology. If it was from sociology they would not have ignored historical and structural conditions which create attitudes. In other words, they are not only not creating an ideology for liberation of women, but are unconsciously preparing the ground for greater oppression by varied class of exploiters ranging from international bourgeoisie²⁶ to the local big and small fry, landlords, the contractors and even the menfolk in one's own household. The anticlimax is when perhaps the older women particularly the mother-in-law joins the ranks of oppressors²⁷. No oppressor takes the advice of the writers but the ideology that they have created is suitably utilized as and when necessary. The middle-class women also have no say in labour legislation, nor are they invited to sit on wage boards and committees²⁸. The exploiters have their own spokesmen, who being small men share the ideology and therefore utilize this ideology at the state, bureaucratic and legislative levels to tilt the law against the working class. It is on the working-class women that the blow falls the hardest.

The "first" and "third" world have not been delinked. The nature of their exploitation therefore does not differ qualitatively, but tends to be more oppressive and relentless in the third world. The major reason for this is underdevelopment, in which both bourgeois and feudal

methods of exploitation continue to operate either simultaneously or specifically. Often the employer himself is not very much above the lower classes in economic status and is unable to pay even subsistence to squeeze out either a small surplus value for himself, or work if it is in a non-productive area. Because of underdevelopment, the major problem of the lower-class women and men is not only low wages, but also unemployment. The latter cuts into their bargaining power for higher wages. If, generally, in the "first" world the mode of exploitation of women is to treat them as reserve army of labour, in India it takes the form of "subemployment", which for historical reasons is more acute in all the vulnerable areas of the three sectors. Subemployment is a useful concept borrowed from the editors of *Monthly Review*²⁹. It has been described as employment of worker often much below "poverty line" (wages being less than the value of their labour-power). They are employed in the full sense of the term, viz. they constitute permanent part of the labour force and are often employed by petty capitalists who are little better off than the workers in highly competitive branches of monopoly-dominated industries.

Exploitation in Agriculture

No complete incisive analysis of exploitation of the productively active working women of India can be attempted here, nor can we pinpoint what particular factors hamper their liberation. The problem is too vast and deep for a short article; besides, the available data is limited and conceptually incomparable. No more than broad trends can be indicated.

We start with an assumption that socially productive group activity is a basic necessity for women's liberation and a socialist revolution a further step towards it. Employment alone does not lead to liberation. The 1971 census for instance indicates a small growth in the total employment of women. But it is necessary to find out why employment is still open to them when there is rampant unemployment among men. Secondly, it is necessary to assess the nature and type of employment that is still "readily" open to them. Finally, one has to analyse the above two factors in order to understand what contributes to or militates against their liberation. In other words, what is the relationship between liberation and productive activity.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF CULTIVATORS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS
(in 000s)

	1961 Census		1971 Census	
	Culti- vators	Agri. Labo- urers	Culti- vators	Agri Lab- ourers
Male	66,416	17,323	68,966	31,313
Female	33,112	14,196	9,714	15,992
Total	99,528	31,519	78,707	47,305

SOURCE: *Indian Labour Statistics*, 1972, p 6.

Typical of the Third World, the largest percentage—83 per cent—of the female labour force is employed in the agrarian sector. The reason for this may be historical, but, the present agrarian “development” policy has had damaging effect which is reflected in the rise of female agricultural labour and decline in the ‘peasantry’.

Even as agricultural labourers the opportunity for women to participate in productive activity is relatively more limited than men, because of the pattern of division of labour, apart from the seasonal nature of their employment. As agricultural labourers, men find employment for 208 days while women do so for only 138 days⁹⁰. If the number of women as agricultural labour is rising in spite of their lower muscle power than men, it is because of the lower wage rates for all wage agricultural operations. In spite of it, if men predominate over women as agricultural labour⁹¹, this is due to the fact that stronger patriarchal traditions of North India do not permit women generally to work outside one's home⁹². Regional statistics reveal this.

TABLE II

DAILY WAGES OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (in Paise)

Process	Male	Female
Ploughing, Sowing	100	82
Weeding	88	52
Transplanting	111	69
Harvesting	93	58
All agricultural operations	96	59
Non-agricultural operations	107	62

SOURCE: V B Karnik, “Status of Women in India,” Proceedings of Seminar, ICSSR, February 1973, p 62.

It has been fairly well established that agrarian relation in India is semi-feudal,⁹³ and therefore again agricultural labour is not necessarily free contractual labour.⁹⁴ The widespread prevalence of bonded labour which had been denied till recently has now been recognized and given repeated publicity in daily newspapers.⁹⁵ If an agricultural labourer is reduced to a position of bonded labour her position is so vulnerable that she is even open to physical attack. A British civil servant had reported as early as 1939 that the landlord used the tenants' women-folk to fulfil his lust. There is no reason to believe the situation has changed today⁹⁶.

In Plantations

The very nature of their occupation has left the poor peasant and agricultural labour unorganized. But wherever they are organized the women take an active role not only to fight against oppressors such as money lenders, landlords and bureaucrats, but even against recalcitrant

men in the family, who squander away the meagre family income on liquor.⁸⁷

When agricultural labour was industrialized as it was in the plantations, wages were low and discriminations sharp. The reasons for these were historical; men had to do the harder work of clearing virgin forest to set up plantations. Today, a century later, the women's work is heavier and the hours longer. After independence, trade unions were introduced from above, plantation inquiry committees and wage boards set up periodically, but exploitation and discrimination of wages against women is more intense than before. Today, large accumulation of surplus value for both sterling and Indian companies is achieved by subemployment of women. Particularly noteworthy is the operation of piece and incentive wages for women tea pickers. On the tea estates in the Nilgiris the statutory requirement is for a woman to pick 10 kgs. of tea for which she is paid the daily wages fixed by the wage board. By introducing incentive bonus, she is induced to pick as much as 40 kg. a day, by which her earning merely doubles while in practice she has put in four days' work in a single day. In other words, the planter has saved 50 per cent of his wage bill on women labourers. Is it any wonder that productivity of female labour is continuously rising⁸⁸ and the female labour force is on the increase and exceeds the male. Apart from low wages, the surplus of the available labour force that lives on the plantation acts as a buffer against the women's bargaining power. The mode of payment for men is different. He is paid higher wages than a woman for his "task work" which roughly works out to about four to five hours a day, in contrast to ten hours put in by the women. In addition a man is given a piece of land for his private cultivation; if formerly it was meant as a supplement for his low wages today it acts as a break against any tendency to organized movement.

In Industry

Now to the secondary sector. Large scale organized industries, whether multinational or controlled by local bourgeoisie, need female labour. The fall in the total employment of women in this sector is only apparent partly due to the changing definition of 'worker'. More important is the fact that household industry is linked with large-scale industry.

TABLE III
TOTAL AVERAGE DAILY EMPLOYMENT IN FACTORIES
SUBMITTING RETURNS

	1961	1970
Male	31,24,666	39,90,802
Female	3,72,334	3,69,198
Total	34,97,000	41,60,000

SOURCE: *Indian Labour Statistics*, 1972, p 34.

As Kamala Nath in her analysis of female-male ratio has shown, women are represented primarily in the household sector of industry and their numbers are small in the organized sector.³⁹ What percentage they constitute is not clear. But 90 per cent who are unaccounted in the census are working in small organized units ranging from pottery, handloom,⁴⁰ to even some sophisticated, modern products like radio, television and photographic equipment⁴¹. This form of "putting out" system which has the blessing of the middle-class writers becomes the bane for women's liberation. They are not only overworked but underpaid, under the pretence that the work is substandard. By isolating the worker in her home, she is not only denied the enrichment of social relationship which comes with productive activity, but is also crippled from all possibility of building up any working-class revolutionary consciousness.

In old industries, such as textiles and jute, there is a sharp fall in the employment of women in the factory premises which is partly due to "modernization" (introduction of high speed machinery) in certain sections where women are employed. This has cut down the female labour force to a fourth or fifth. In Bengal certain statutory restrictions on women such as banning lifting of weights, working in certain departments as softener feeder and in the second and third shifts have led to a drastic fall in female employment. The industrial bourgeoisie has also flouted the statutory requirements of creches⁴², maternity leave or maternity benefits⁴³. All these violations are fairly well known. What is totally ignored by the middle class writers is that women in factories have been eased out of their jobs for their militancy. Textile mills⁴⁴ in Bombay and jute mills in Bengal where the militancy of women is said to have exceeded that of men there were dismissals. Padmini Sen Gupta strongly disapproves of this militancy⁴⁵. Incidentally none of the writers or the government has demanded that women be trained to handle new machinery or owners be penalised for not putting the creches and for non-payment of maternity benefits.

Deterrence of Militancy

New techniques have now been developed by Indian industrialists to prevent any industrial "unrest". These consist of adopting villages, ostensibly for the purpose of rural development⁴⁶. To cite only one instance, Mafatlals have not only adopted certain villages in Gujarat and advanced money to the local peasants to grow cash crops, but also set up small cooperative units in the same area for primary processing of cotton such as ginning, before it is sent to the factories in Bombay. This is a bonanza for the owner: there is a continuous flow of raw or semi-processed material flowing into the factory, the primary process being often a woman's job; the capital investment in the cooperatives is gently passed on to the peasant-worker who repays the loan and interest directly to the bank (the industrialist has only used his good offices to get the necessary loan sanctioned); the wage rates are lower in the village than in the par-

ent unit situated in the metropolitan city; the most crucial factor is the physical separation of the new rural proletariat, particularly the potentially militant (women) from the urban industrial labour force which has a history of organized movement.

Incidentally, it must be recorded that the industrial bourgeoisie however much they may fear the militancy of the women also recognizes their efficiency and devotion to duty, particularly those of the *adivasi* women working in heavy industries. In spite of family responsibility falling on women, there is no indication of higher rate of absenteeism among them⁴⁷. Yet the rate of employment of women in this sector is falling. One cannot forget that the *adivasi* women have a long tradition of revolutionary struggles.

Mines had once been an important source of employment for women. The female labour force had increased from 30,488 in 1901 to 70,656 in 1929 and 1,06,300 in 1961. A sharp decline began from 1956 onwards and fell to 77,200 in 1970. The decline coincided with the award of Labour Appellate Tribunal which came into force in May 1956. Immediately the mine-owners discovered that "Men load wagons more quickly than women"⁴⁸. Nobody denies that men have greater muscle power than women, yet, till the pre-award period, loading wagons was purely a woman's task which men had 'refused' to do.

Labour laws of the "first" and the "third" world react to the available labour supply. Sweden, for instance, which has had a perennial shortage of labour in recent years, lifted the ban on women working underground in mines. In countries which has redundant labour force (India is one of them) women are permitted to work only on the surface. Does this truly imply a concern for women's welfare?

In Multinational Firms

One must also take into consideration the mode of exploitation of female labour by powerful multinationals. The productive women workers in these industries are often envied as a "pampered" and "privileged" group⁴⁹. The subtle mode of exploitation of female labour can be illustrated by the case of pharmaceutical—one of the most profitable—industry in India today. Thirty to forty per cent of the labour force is female, a large percentage of whom work as "packers". This is a deliberate label so as to conveniently categorize them as unskilled. The unskilled status is maintained by paying uniform wages though a packer has to tackle a variety of jobs which vary from unskilled, (like labelling) semi-skilled to skilled (such as control and maintenance of machinery)⁵⁰. In other words, they have deliberately delinked skill and wage-rates, a most useful method of extracting surplus value.

Another form of saving on wage bill is by maintaining nearly 50 per cent of the female labour force either on temporary or casual labour, irrespective of years of service, which is sometimes as long as ten years. By maintaining a part of the labour force on temporary basis, it is

deprived of certain wage benefits, such as provident fund and gratuity. This is manipulated by alternating overproduction with underproduction, on the pretext of non-availability of raw materials. Yet neither sales nor profits show a fall by this method of operation. Two hundred days of continuous employment is a prerequisite to qualify for the provident fund. The production process is so manipulated that most of the women workers "manage to get" as many as 197 days of continuous employment.

Maternity benefits are not paid by the multinationals. There is a legal loophole under which they take shelter, but a woman productive worker continues to suffer, as she is deprived of three months' wages during her period of maternity leave. Although factories are covered by the ESI Act, not every woman worker qualifies for the ESI benefit which now includes maternity benefit. Therefore a section of women workers, even in an organized industry, is deprived of legal rights.

Trade Unions: Economism

Their work is not free from tension. They work on a conveyor belt system where productivity of labour can be measured precisely. If a single worker slackens even for a moment, due either to illness or momentary preoccupation, the total productivity falls. The "culprit" is marked and watched and, if necessary, punitive action is taken particularly if she is inclined towards trade union activity.

There is still another clever technique in selection recruitment. It operates as a bar on developing any class consciousness. In the first few years only Eurasians and some middle-class Parsee girls were selected, later the "community" bias ceased but not the class bias. Only middle-class girls, irrespective of the community but with "clean hygienic habits", were handpicked by the executives of the organizations. Hygienic habits were made coterminous with middle-class under the pretext that the girls had to work in aseptic conditions, for instance in the ampule filling section. This practice is found in the parent companies as well. Capitalist exploitation whether in the "first" or "third" world has to resort to tricks for its survival although the techniques may differ. In India, the trade unions have protested and have largely succeeded in putting an end to "handpicking" of candidates. In spite of it, the subtle technique used by the international bourgeoisie has worked. The women workers smart under the injustice but their middle-class background combined with the work which is classed as unskilled labour, has resulted in their total alienation. One has also to take into consideration such structural factors as unemployment, rising rate of inflation and the gross underpayment of wages to their counterparts, in Indian proprietary concerns. These women fully realize the value of trade unions though purely from the economic point of view. They promptly pay their union subscription, take no active part in trade union work, but continue to give it silent moral support.

Besides large-scale industries, India as an underdeveloped country has not only small and cottage industries, but also petty commodity

production. The nature of the work that falls on women in these areas, comes under the secondary sector and needs to be investigated.

In Petty Commodity Production

Small-scale industries as indicated earlier are controlled indirectly by the big bourgeoisie and directly by the small. The unorganized industries are mainly in the hands of the small fry, the largest employers of women in the tertiary sector. These are known as feminine intensive industries. They are sweated industries, the most common being beedi, cashewnut, shellac and glass. The very term 'unorganized' indicates that they are not covered by even marginal labour legislation. In establishments such as cashewnut factories, recruitment is seasonal. Contract labour was prohibited by law in 1971, but the practice continues to persist. Poverty compels women to take up employment whenever and wherever it is available and the abundance of labour makes it almost impossible for them to organize and fight for their rights. A large number of women are found in beedi manufacture. Wherever the work is socialized, they are huddled together in dark basements or attics and are not even provided with basic amenities such as drinking water and toilets. They produce commodities but their work is often deliberately privatized by a system known as *gharghate* (work at home). It has useful functions from the point of view of the employer. Under the pretext that the quality is poor the piece rate is even lower than what is paid to those who work in his "factory".⁵¹

Not much data is available on the division of labour between the sexes in petty commodity production. In the case of pottery for instance, one knows that the nature of woman's work is longer, more arduous and monotonous. Apart from household work her workday begins earlier to prepare clay, clean and knead it. The man relaxes until everything is ready and then takes over the creative task of shaping it on his wheel. His work begins and ends at the wheel in the shade. The woman cannot share even this small privilege. The task of drying, preparing the kiln, firing the pots, polishing and selling them is hers. The man is the *Prajapathi* while she is the unpaid assistant, the wife.⁵² In those areas where patriarchal tradition holds sway, there is no reason to believe that the division of labour would be more favourable for women than men in petty commodity production.

Women's participation in the tertiary sector falls mainly under construction and white collar work. A large number of women are engaged in construction work, building dams, roads and buildings—private and public, in other words creating the infrastructure. Technically, the Minimum Wages Act is applicable to the construction worker, yet the wages of men and women are never the same. Women are conveniently classified as coolies (unskilled workers) and paid lower wage rates.⁵³ "Profit is the main motive" for employing women. The labour contractors frankly admit "that without female labour much of the charm of con-

struction industry would be lost and that labour cost would increase substantially."⁵⁴

In White-collar Jobs

Regarding white collar work, the middle-class women writers gloat over the fact that employment is rising both in public and private sectors. But they fail to see that the number falls short of the openings as revealed by the number registered in the employment exchange and still unable to find a job.⁵⁵ True, the figures given below give neither the sex ratio nor the type of employment sought. Everyone is sceptical about the employment exchange, the urban white collar perhaps relatively less so than others. Objective conditions have made the white collar worker, particularly in banks and insurance companies who were formerly in the private sector, less self-conscious. They had begun to participate in mass action whenever the trade union gave a call, and thereby their position *vis a vis* the employer had improved. Therefore, today, there is no sex-wise

TABLE IV

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Year	No. of exchanges	No. of registrations	No. of applicants placed in employment	No. of applicants in live register
1956	143	16,69,895	1,89,855	7,58,503
1970	429	45,15,934	4,47,195	40,68,554

SOURCE: *Indian Labour Statistics*, 1971-72, p 47.

wage discrimination. This is also a sensitive sector very vocal and sometimes militant, and no government dares to antagonize the "middle class" if it can help it. This sector has often shown greater resilience than expected. It is the women of this class who generally face the "role conflict" which the writers are so fond of screaming from the roof tops. It is up to these women to resolve it by demanding that men share the responsibility of home and child care now that they themselves have taken on the responsibility of earning a living. This is not the final solution to the problem, it is a structural one and can be only resolved by structural transformation.

As Domestic Helps

A large section of women whose ages range from 15 to 70 from lower and lower middle class can find no jobs or productive employment. There is sometimes only one alternative, that of domestic service.⁵⁶ The wages and hours of work are unregulated and a full-time worker can be reduced to the level of wage slave, whether male or female. If part-time work is sought, one has to work in several houses to earn enough to make it worthwhile. It also means that they have to exert themselves far above their physical capacity. The woes do not end here. At home they have to

contend with the "lord and master", whose nerves frayed by overwork and underpayment, picks up quarrels. Many husbands resort to physical attack after a drink. The woman is also a worker and therefore does not accept it meekly. Tensions are therefore rife in this area. Can there be any alternative to structural solution for this widespread problem? An attempt was made in 1971-72 in Bombay to organize domestic servants. The movement picked up and threatened to become too militant for the comfort of the organizers, the Jana Sangh. It was therefore dropped like a hot brick before the grassroot leadership was trained to take over completely. The petty-bourgeoisie needs domestic servants, and this political party was not slow to realize it was raising a Frankenstein.

Since women get a worse deal^{5 7} than men, it is up to them to consciously bring about a change at every possible point. It is a major revolutionary process which implies that exploited and oppressed women have to join hands with exploited men to fight the exploiters to start and complete the process of their liberation. We began with a quotation and we shall end with another.

Do not say the strong pass is girded with iron. This very day we shall take the first step to scale the summit.

MAO TSE TUNG

- ¹ It can even be regarded as a training ground for action for bringing about structural change and a prerequisite for socialist women's liberation.
- ² It was mooted in 1969, the year when women liberation movement everywhere in the west had reached its height, and approved by the General Assembly in 1972.
- ³ Wally Secombe, article in *New Left Review*, 83, 1974, p 7 ff.
- ⁴ The term 'third' is used in the old sense.
- ⁵ E Toffanin, *Employment of Women: International Seminar 1968*, No 2, OECD, p 16.
- ⁶ M Deharang, *Employment of Women: International Seminar 1968*, No 2, OECD, pp 256-275.
- ⁷ There is no legal discrimination against a woman taking up vocational training but : (1) Lack of job opportunities and wage differentials in certain technical fields act as a deterrent on their taking up specialised training; (2) This structural bias operates even earlier at the secondary school level where the schedule in the time table varies for girls and boys. For instance, in West Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Denmark, the number of hours devoted to mathematics and science for boys is substituted by domestic science, child training and dress making for girls. (E Toffanin *op. cit.*, pp 31, 35).
- ⁸ R Gubbels, *Employment of Women: International Seminar 1968*, No 2, OECD, pp 99, 101.
- ⁹ In a male society, a woman's earnings are regarded as secondary. Wherever it is clubbed together for the purpose of income tax as in France, West Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands a good chunk of her income is eaten up by the progressive system of taxation. (E Toffanin *op. cit.* p 36).
- ¹⁰ E Boserup, *Women's Role in Economic Development*, pp 77-78.
- ¹¹ Separation of sex—particularly formation of men's towns created not only a demand for restaurant service "but the service of female company" in the form of prostitution, bartenders, dancers, singers etc. (Boserup, *op. cit.*, p 99), which was an unknown phenomenon before the colonialist arrived on the scene. This point is mentioned only to indicate how "buying of female company" depresses the position of women. "Female company can be bought only in a market society, whatever its stage of development."

- ¹² E Boserup, *op. cit.*, p 19.
- ¹³ Note the interesting debate between Evelyn Reed and Howard Hymes in *International Socialist Review*, 1975, Vol 36, No 3.
- ¹⁴ This is not to imply that the feminist movement was the brain-child of the bourgeoisie, rather it was exaggerated and utilized for its own end.
- ¹⁵ The numerical strength of these classes vary in different colonial countries after the World Wars, perhaps it was the highest in India.
- ¹⁶ National Council of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India 1969, p 379.
- ¹⁷ D Vakil, in *Femina*, 14 February 1975, p 23.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ The research unit on women's studies SNDT University, has compiled a bibliography which lists 16 books, 38 theses, 90 articles and 17 government reports on Women. Neera Desai reviewing some of the major works also complains that the focus is largely on middle class (Neera Desai, *Survey Report on Roles and Attitudes to Women* (Mimeo) ICSSR p 16.)
- ²⁰ Even if one arbitrarily puts middle class in the income-tax-paying category, they constitute less than one per cent of the total population.
- ²¹ Unless one has family wealth to fall back upon.
- ²² Employment of Women: International Seminar 1968, No 2, OECD, p 13.
- ²³ Padmini Sen Gupta who writes about working-class women condemns upper-and middle-class women who take up gainful employment and deprive men and lower-class women of their job opportunities.
- ²⁴ It would be salutary to remind them that as early as 1970, nearly 70,000 qualified engineers were unemployed. There is no indication that the situation has improved.
- ²⁵ One also cannot ignore the existing reality that if: (a) the differential wage rates are based on sex and (b) some education is an additional qualification even for unskilled jobs, then would it not be rational to first open out whatever possible educational opportunities there are to a son rather than to a daughter? Both are potential wage-earners, but with differential opportunities. This is merely speculative. The actual observation of this writer has been that parents today, whether in urban slums, plantations or in small hamlets where poor peasants live, clamour for educational opportunities for all their children boys and girls. Even if they do not see education as a possibility of social mobility, they realize it is necessary atleast for mere survival.
- ²⁶ The international bourgeoisie continues to operate in all the three sectors.
- ²⁷ S Mody and S Mhatre, in *Bulletin of the Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 7 No 1, 1975 p 54.
- ²⁸ Apart from the difference in class background and lack of empathy, they also lack realism due to lack of contact with the truly exploited classes. Working-class women in India have shown tremendous capacity to fight against all types of oppressors, the bourgeoisie (R C James, pp 209-220) the landlords (G Omvedt, p 45) and even against their errant husbands (M Mies, p 64). The peasant and tribal women of India have a history of participating in revolutionary movements.
- ²⁹ Editorial in *Monthly Review* Vol 26, No 2, June 1975, pp 6, 7.
- ³⁰ *Indian Agriculture in Brief* (Thirteenth edition), Ministry of Agriculture, Indian Labour Statistics, Government of India 1972, p 17.
- ³¹ Even if both man and woman do manual labour, still a man "will find time to smoke his hukka" a woman finds no time even to adequately nurse her baby. The baby is put in a hammock made of cloth and suspended on a branch of a tree or fastened to her back. (Shanthi Chakravathy in *Social Change*, March—June 1975, p 13).
- ³² Apart from wage discrimination, there are other types of social discrimination which add to the burden. The bulk of agricultural labour belongs to scheduled and backward classes viz. 44 per cent according to 1961 census. Therefore they are forced to live not only in the outskirts, but in the most unhygienic parts of the village, far from all social amenities such as drinking water.

- ⁸³ C Bettelheim, *India Independent*, 1968, p 23.
- ⁸⁴ M Savur, *Structure of a Village in Maharashtra* (Mimeo) University of Bombay, 1975 p 12.
- ⁸⁵ *The Times of India*, 3 May 1975.
- ⁸⁶ D Symington, *Report on the Aboriginal Tribes*, 1939, p 36.
- ⁸⁷ M Mies, in the *Bulletin of the Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 7, No 1, p 64.
- ⁸⁸ M Savur, in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol VIII, No 11, 1973, p 55.
- ⁸⁹ K Nath, in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol III, No 31, 1968, p 121.
- ⁴⁰ One may mention the existence of small power loom units which cluster together on the periphery of an industrial town. Biwandi, for instance, on the outskirts of Bombay, has 33,156 authorized and 15,000 to 20,000 unauthorized looms (A R Momin, p 177) where grey cotton, art silk and synthetics are woven and fed to textile industries owned by Birlas and Khataus. In the Bombay mills the woven material is further processed and the brand name stamped. 80 per cent of these power looms are said to be financed by 'Marwari' and 'Gujarathi' financiers. The link between the big bourgeoisie and the 'financier' is not clear, nor does one know the percentage of female labour employed here. But the reason for such "putting out" system is clear and has been discussed elsewhere.
- ⁴¹ K Saradmoni, in *Yojana*, Vol XIX, Nos, 13-14, 1975, p 29.
- ⁴² It is reported that untrained "ayahs" rather than trained nurses are employed in creches (Padmini Sen Gupta, p 85). This is another saving in total wage bill, but the working mothers are afraid to trust their children to the untrained women and creches are empty in most factories and plantations.
- ⁴³ Maternity benefit now falls under ESI, and an analysis shows that the employees' contribution alone exceeds the actual cost of the benefit that the employees avail themselves (Savur, in *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol II, No 40, 1967, p 1817). The employers' real loss is to be seen only in terms of "women" days lost by availing of maternity leave.
- ⁴⁴ R C James, "Discrimination against Women in Bombay Textile Industry" quoted in ILO, *Working Women in Changing India*, pp 209-220.
- ⁴⁵ P Sen Gupta, *Women Workers in India*, (Mimeo) p 113.
- ⁴⁶ N Tata, in *The Times of India*, September 1975, p 1.
- ⁴⁷ P Sen Gupta, *op. cit.*, p 80.
- ⁴⁸ I L O; *Working Women in Changing India*, p 24.
- ⁴⁹ Her counterpart in the parent concern is paid three times the wages paid in India and those in Indian proprietary concerns grossly underpaid. The wage rate may be as low as Rs 150-250 per month.
- ⁵⁰ *Maharashtra Government Gazette*, 5 January 1961, pp 40, 43.
- ⁵¹ P Sen Gupta, *op. cit.*, p 62.
- ⁵² M Savur, *Kumbhars of Kumbharwada* (Mimeo) University of Bombay 1974, pp 17-30.
- ⁵³ ILO, *op. cit.*, p 53.
- ⁵⁴ E Boserup, *op. cit.*, p 80.
- ⁵⁵ A number of urban middle-class girls are also finding employment in the growing number of five star hotels, as guides in tourist bureaus, as models and in films to list a few instances. The problem that these women face needs to be studied to build a consciousness among them. As this falls outside our frame of reference, no further mention will be made of it.
- ⁵⁶ In a case study of 278 blue-collar families of Poona the number of those above poverty line was 19. Of these in only one family was a woman's earning not necessary for keeping it above that 'poverty line' (Venu Dabholkar, in *Artha Vijnana* 1961 Vol 3, No 3, p 188).
- ⁵⁷ In non-socialist countries those who adhere to patriarchal traditions create an ideology that women are dependents. It is however belied by certain demographic facts. And one may well ask who is the weaker sex?

WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY

27

NON-WORKERS ACCORDING TO MAIN ACTIVITY 1971

Particulars	Females per 1000 males
Full-time student	430
Household duties	745
Beggars, vagrants etc.	537
Inmates of penal, mental and charitable institutions	254
Others	190

Ashish Bose, *Demographic Profile of Women in India* as quoted in S N Kulkarni, *Demographic and Nutritional Background of the Health and Status of Women in India*, pp 42, 43.

CAROL A BROWN

Patriarchal Capitalism and the Female-Headed Family

IN THE United States today over three million family units are female-headed; about ten per cent of units with children consist of mother and children only. The most usual cause for the absence of the husband-father is divorce or desertion. It is the hope of this author that an analysis of the causes and consequences of female-headed families in the U S, the most developed capitalist nation, will aid social scientists elsewhere to understand the relation of capitalism and family structure.

I will follow a socialist feminist approach which recognizes that women were the first class,¹ that despite the development of other class relations the dialectic of sex remains of major importance in analysing any class society,² and that the oppression of women through patriarchy is a fundamental and necessary feature of capitalism.³ A basic political principle of socialist-feminism is that the overthrow of capitalism, while a necessary precondition to the liberation of women, is not in itself sufficient. The patriarchal family structure, attitudes and domestic exchange economy must also be overthrown. A basic debate among socialist-feminists is whether the dialectic of sex, the contradiction in the interests of the sexes, is an antagonistic or non-antagonistic contradiction.⁴

The dialectic of sex takes many forms, depending on the culture and the economy. Not all forms are patriarchal. Patriarchy defined at its

loosest is the control of the economy and polity and family system by men who, through a system of interdependence and solidarity, control and exploit the labour of women for the men's individual and collective benefit.⁵ In a class society based on patriarchy, class relations are relations among classes of men.

An important aspect of women's labour is the bearing and rearing of children. Under patriarchy the women's children pass into the control of men for the men's utilization and exploitation. It is contrary to the nature of most patriarchies to permit the formation of female-headed families. We will show, however, that patriarchal capitalism encourages this development without diminishing the economic and social benefits to men of the patriarchal structure.

Patriarchy takes many forms. The best known is the exploitation of an individual woman by her father, husband, or father-in-law. But, especially in reference to modern capitalism, it is necessary to recognize that patriarchy also includes the collective exploitation of the female sex, by the male sex, and the exploitation of the female sex by ruling-class men for the ruling class's economic and social benefit.⁶

Family-centred Role

Patriarchal capitalism is the only form the dialectic of sex takes under capitalism, and patriarchy is necessary for capitalism's continuation. Patriarchal capitalism developed out of patriarchal feudalism of Europe. The exploitation of women's labour by men was seen as natural. Marx said, "The maintenance and reproduction of the working class is and must ever be a necessary condition of the reproduction of capital. But the capitalist may safely leave its fulfilment to the labourer's instincts of self-preservation and propagation."⁷ In other words given the pre-existence of patriarchy, women could "naturally" be utilized as unpaid "reproducers" of labour—their husband's daily labour and the children's future labour. Reproduction includes such things as laundry, cooking, cleaning, nursing and other personal services to keep family members safe and happy, and the buying and transforming of exchange goods produced by the capitalists into use-value goods for the family. The benefit went both to the individual husband, who obtained a cheap servant and children to support him in his old age, as well as to the capitalist class which was free to exploit the surplus value of the male worker without having to pay for his reproduction. Capitalist males also directly benefitted from the utilization and exploitation of their own wives as reproducers and maintainers of their own and their children's labour and the family wealth, and from the exploitation of other women as low-paid factory workers, servants, and prostitutes.⁸

The basic structure of patriarchal capitalism was settled early. The split of men as producers and women as reproducers reached its height in the Victorian era, the latter third of the nineteenth century, when Marxist economic theory developed.⁹ Among urban societies still today

capitalism depends on the labour of the woman in the home both to care for her husband and children and to turn exchange goods into use values. Women do the socially necessary production that capitalism finds unprofitable, as well as taking the blame for capitalism's failures. "Bad cooking" is blamed for poor meals, rather than low wages or adulterated foods.

The transformation of women into household dependents, surviving entirely on the man's wages and depending on him for her livelihood, was by no means peaceful or complete. To some extent in Europe, but especially in the U S which did not have a pre-existing feudal structure, women were from the beginning and continue to be engaged in non-family production and wage labour, often in competition and conflict with men. Women's labour was often exploited directly in production by slave-masters and capitalists rather than indirectly through household work and familial dependency.¹⁰ Women in the U S in the nineteenth century struggled for their liberation from both patriarchal and capitalist exploitation and were active in the socialist and communist movements.

20th Century: Towards Industry-centredness

Beginning in the twentieth century, and developed now to the point where the trend is clear, a major transformation took place in the structure of patriarchal capitalism. Rather than the idealized family of the nineteenth century with a husband-worker and a wife-homemaker, we now find the majority of women, including married mothers, engaged directly in wage labour. We find women marrying less, bearing fewer children. We also find the growth of female-headed families, consisting of mother and children only caused by the voluntary departure of the father-husband.¹¹ These women are not working for, or under, their male relatives. Although the growth of female-headed families through the voluntary departure of men might appear to be the result of a decline of patriarchy, we will show that it is in fact merely the transformation of the dialectic of sex within patriarchal capitalism from family-centered exploitation of women to industrial-centered exploitation of women. The benefits continue to flow both to individual men, who obtain the benefit of the cheap services of women, and to capitalist men who obtain both the surplus value and the services.

Before detailing these changes, however, it is desirable to discuss the imperialist expansion of patriarchal capitalism. The transformation taking place in the U S may not reproduce itself elsewhere because of the different needs of capitalism in the Third World.

In colonized countries the development of patriarchal capitalism did not grow naturally, but was imposed upon the societies. Just as the old economic, landholding class and productive relations had to be destroyed or altered to capitalism's benefit, so also did the family structure and dialectic of sex. If a pre-existing patriarchy enabled men to receive so much benefit from women and children's labour that the men had no incentive to labour themselves, then that patriarchy had to be broken.

European colonial governments often liberated women from purdah, suttee, bride-prices, domestic slavery, harems and the like.¹² On the other hand, if the pre-existing society was one in which women had economic power within the family or in the marketplace, that power had also to be broken. By giving men exclusive rights to jobs, landholding, trading licenses and so on, the colonial governments relegated women to becoming unpaid reproducers of the family's labour power, dependent upon their husbands.¹³ The alteration of traditional family forms is not merely cultural imperialism but basic to the structure of capitalism. Capitalism has to obtain a labour force, and to get the labour force to bear the costs of its own reproduction through the exploitation of women.

In the US and Europe the capitalist system had benefitted from making the wage-earning family completely dependent on the capitalist system for its consumption, thus creating markets. Under imperialism the market is primarily in the metropolitan countries. The imperial powers would prefer that the colonies, and the neo-colonies, become "self-sufficient", that is, the imperial powers benefit from throwing the costs of reproducing the colony's labour power on to the colony. Again the family is important.¹⁴ Although the traditional agricultural sector in many colonies is perceived as separate from the modern capitalist sector, in fact modern capitalism often depends on the labour of the wife and children on the farms to produce sufficient goods and household labour to support themselves and to maintain the male urban worker during periods of sickness, unemployment and old age. As a result the employers can pay below subsistence wages to their labourers because the family is subsidizing the worker. In this case capitalism benefits from encouraging the continued exclusion of women from wage labour and the continued upholding of the family-based patriarchal powers of men.

Woman-power Needs of Capitalist Expansion

The twentieth century transformation of capitalism in the US, including monopolization and imperialism, had transformed its patriarchal features from family-centered to industrial-centered. The patriarchal controls over women and the exploitation of women's labour take place less through husbands in families and more by ruling-class men, to the benefit of themselves and all other men. Two main causes can be traced. First, the value of women's labour in the home decreased both for capitalism and for husbands; second, the growth of capitalism required an expanding labour force that could only come from drawing women out of the home and into wage labour.

The inherent expansive tendencies of capitalism and the need to develop new markets led capitalism to take over more and more of the reproductive functions of the home.¹⁵ Food, clothing, entertainment, health care, all became areas of industrialization. Industrialism produces these goods and services more efficiently and more cheaply than individual women working alone. Families were able to, and often had to, buy in

the market the goods and services that the mother had previously produced. In addition, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, workmen's compensation, medical insurance, all part of the transformation to monopoly capitalism decreased the worker's need for a family to fall back on in times of stress.

The biggest change was in the position of children. An advanced technology requires an increasingly skilled and disciplined labour force. Capitalism could no longer safely leave the reproduction of this part of the labour force to "the labourer's instincts of self-preservation and propagation." The unskilled labour of children became less useful to capitalism than the education of children to become skilled workers as adults. Child labour was outlawed and a system of compulsory education was established, often over the protests of working-class families who needed the children's wages to survive, and who were now expected to bear the costs of maintaining the children while they were in school as well as the costs of maintaining the schools through taxation. Children became an increasingly costly burden to families.¹⁶ The American working class increasingly demanded access to birth control. As children were still valuable to the capitalist class as future workers, mass access to birth control was forbidden by law until the mid-twentieth century, when an excess of children, especially black children, began to be seen as a threat to economic stability.¹⁷

The result of these various changes was that women's home-bound labour became less valuable both to a woman's husband and to the capitalist system, and in the case of child-bearing, a burden to be avoided by families. At the same time that women were becoming less valuable at home, capitalism had an increased need for cheap labour in industry.

Integration into Wage Labour

During the nineteenth century, immigration from Europe and other continents had provided much of the expansion of the labour force. The closing of the immigration system required employers to draw their labour from the native-born population, predominantly white women and to a lesser extent black men and women. The growth of monopoly capitalism and American imperialism demanded the expansion of record-keeping, bureaucratic controls, and office work, and the development of a clerical proletariat, that is, large numbers of cheap, literate, easily-replaced and insecure workers. Women quickly became this clerical proletariat.¹⁸ A cheap labour force was also needed to produce the goods and services in the market that women had previously produced at home. Women's work in the home became women's work in the labour market.

As the domestic value of women to their husbands and to capitalism decreased, the patriarchal feudal laws that had kept women oppressed by their husbands began to be abandoned. As wives became less valuable divorce became legal. As children became costly, women were given equal rights and obligations toward their children. As women's wage-

labour and property holding increased, married women became allowed to keep their own property and their own wages. Public schools and colleges opened their doors to educate women for their roles in an advanced technological society. The vast majority of American women are trained in secretarial services and home economics through the compulsory public high schools.

Today the majority of women work for wage labour.¹⁹ Their work is low paid, and is concentrated in clerical office work or in domestic-goods and services industries. In these latter, women are doing for low pay the same work they did unpaid in the home—food processing, food serving, garment making, laundry, child care, nursing, teaching, entertainment, mental health services and social services. However, men have not lost their patriarchal benefits because of the integration of women into wage labour. Women continue to have to do unpaid reproductive labour—caring for their husbands, children and homes—in addition to their low-paid work. The change is from the private exploitation of a wife by her husband to the public exploitation of women by men. In patriarchal capitalism the relations between classes of men, although antagonistic with respect to the control of capital, are cooperative with respect to the control of women.

Part of the arrangement between male labour and male capital arrived at by the turn of the twentieth century is that men receive a family wage, that is, a wage sufficient to support a family.²⁰ They receive this wage whether they have a family to support or not. The average income of men is approximately twice as high as the average income of those women who work full-time, full year, and most women do not work full-time, full-year. "The lower pay women receive in the labour market perpetuates men's material advantage over women and encourages women to choose wifery as a career. Women's home responsibilities in turn reinforce their inferior labour market position. Thus women can enter the labour force in great numbers, but as long as they do so in low-status, low-paying jobs, the patriarchal system remains intact."²¹ Wives are still dependent on their husband's incomes, and still have to perform unpaid labour for their husbands. Even working wives are dependent on their husbands. The average working wife is able to contribute only 27 per cent of the family's income.

Double Benefit to the System

Because women perform low-paid "reproductive" labour whether in the home or for pay, and because men receive family wages sufficient to pay for women's labour whether married or not, men are able to receive the benefit of women's reproductive labour *either* through the direct labour of their own wives at home *or* through buying the benefit of the low-paid labour of women in the marketplace. Capitalism also receives a double benefit. The unpaid labour of women provides reproductive services to the system as well as to the husband; the paid labour of women creates

profit to the employer.

As more and more wives and mothers are drawn into wage labour, their total labour is both extended and intensified.²³ The married woman ends up working two jobs for two employers—her boss and her husband—and working twice as hard. She has to accomplish the housework in the fewer hours left over after wage labour. The majority of women do marry since their own wage labour is not sufficiently paid to support themselves or their children if they wish to have any, and thus the women, whether working for wages or not, have to become domestic workers for their husbands.

This double exploitation of women is a major feature of American life. As might be expected, it has created its own set of contradictions. Women sometimes prefer the double exploitation, and both men and women often have incentives to divorce.

For many women the opportunity to do wage labour, even though it increases her work and her exploitation, is seen by her as an advantage. In a cash-nexus economy, to have money of one's own is an improvement over total dependency, and her economic contribution to the family, however small, gives her a measure of status and power within the family that was previously lacking to her. Many family arguments take place over the wife's desire to work and the husband's desire for her to stay at home. Even though the total family income is diminished by her staying home, the man perceives his advantage of having total use of her labour and having power over her.

The development of industrial-centered patriarchal capitalism has given both men and women a potential economic incentive to divorce. For men, who receive a family wage whether or not they have families deserting or divorcing their wives and children is economically advantageous. Since family services can be bought more cheaply on the open market, thanks to the low pay of the women working to provide these services, it is more sensible for a man to keep his family wage to himself and let his wife bear the costs of childrearing and child supporting. In losing his children he is not losing the valuable security that they used to provide him, but the costly burden they now represent. From before the turn of the century and increasingly, desertion by working class husbands of their dependent wives and children had become a major social problem in the industrial cities of the U.S. A public welfare system had to be created to support widowed, deserted and divorced mothers. Welfare payments follow the principle of the iron law of wages—that is, the mothers are given only the subsistence income necessary to reproduce and maintain the family while the surplus value of their labour—the value of their grown children—is extracted by the capitalists.

Divorce and Desertion

The same is happening in poorer and colonized countries. Men have increasing incentive to depend entirely on their own wage labour for

income and on market relations for the goods and services of consumption. They divorce the wife at home and keep their wages to themselves.

Contrary to many Marxist expectations, divorce and desertion is greatest in lower income families, and is less likely to happen the higher the family income.²³ Among the bourgeoisie and the affluent middle class children still have a family name and family wealth to maintain, and the maintenance of the family is an important part of the maintenance of class relations.²⁴ The burden on women is least in upper-class families. Men can afford to have their wives stay at home, and the wife can perhaps hire another woman to do the more burdensome household chores. The wives of capitalists are the most dependent on their husbands of any women, because their own wage labour cannot make much difference in the extent of the husband's power and control.

Although women cannot easily support themselves and their children under patriarchal capitalism, women of the middle, working and lower classes do have an incentive to divorce. If the husband is low paid or unemployed, he may not be contributing as much to the family as he is taking out in goods and services. Her economic situation may improve by ridding herself of him. Whatever the husband's economic contribution to the wife and children we must remember that personal servitude, indeed domestic slavery, suffered by dependent women under familial patriarchy is as oppressive to them as slavery always is.²⁵ The exploitation of her wage labour by capitalism is often less personal, intense, and humiliating than the exploitation of her domestic services by her husband. If she leaves him she will be very much poorer but will perhaps *feel* freer. By divorce she gains a measure of control over herself and her children that is lacking to a married woman. The divorced mother is not more free nor is her exploitation diminished. It is rather altered in form, and that form may be less oppressive to her in psychological and social terms. There has recently developed a tendency for women to leave both their husbands and their children, thus freeing themselves from domestic service to others altogether.

Victims of the Contradictions

The current developments within patriarchal capitalism give both men and women an incentive to break their family relationships, but the continuation of patriarchal capitalism requires the continuation of these same family relationships. As a result of this contradiction, divorce and desertion increase, while at the same time the ruling class and the organs of public opinion criticize the men and women who break their family ties and the women who become heads of families in the absence of men. The public welfare system is under constant attack from politicians who seek to force women back under the dependence on men, or to force them into low-paid service work. The Moynihan Report claimed that the cause of black people's poverty in the US was the "tangle of pathology" caused by black women becoming the heads of their families.²⁶ Proposals to increase

public child care services and take some of the burden off of families are denounced as ruining the American family system and threatening the security of the American way of life. (Those were among the reasons Nixon gave for vetoing such legislation.) Efforts to gain equal job opportunities for women so that they could support themselves and their families are met with scepticism and hostility among men of all classes.

Female-headed families are often caused to suffer poverty and social problems which pressure women to remain under the "protection" of their husbands, or to remarry if divorced. Female-headed families have an average income only 35 per cent as high as incomes of male-headed families. Legally, ex-husbands are required to help support their children following divorce, but in fact the majority do not. Among ex-husbands making less than \$4,000 a year, only 20 per cent contribute to their children's support. The wife and child are usually entirely abandoned to their fate. Divorced mothers are twice as likely to work for wages as married mothers are. However, she is usually solely responsible for her children's care, and taking a job conflicts with taking care of the children. Only a minority of female heads of household are able to work full-time, full-year, and these usually have older children. The only other form of support is public welfare, which is provided only as subsistence income and keeps the family poor. A female-headed family on welfare has an average income only 17 per cent as high as the average incomes of male-headed, wage-earning families.²⁷

Women who head families are not paid the same respect as male heads of families. Often decent housing is denied them by landlords who discriminate. Institutions such as schools and hospitals do not pay attention to her wishes for the children. Often neighbours show lack of respect for their privacy or property. Authorities in juvenile courts are more likely to send her children to prison or reform school than the children of a male-headed family. Men often make sexual advances on the grounds that she does not belong to anyone. The female head of family is blamed by society for juvenile delinquency, failure of the children's school work and psychiatric illness of her children. The mother is made to feel a failure for not keeping her man happy, and feel that any failures of the children are her fault.

Public day-care centres for children of divorced or employed mothers are few. There is no public or collective housekeeping assistance. Small houses and land-use patterns make it difficult for the mother to live with others who might assist her. She is often shunned from married society. What social and economic support she receives often comes from her close personal friends and her parental family. She often cannot afford entertainment that costs money and formal institutions are of little help.

Patriarchy to Equality

This litany of ills may at first glance make the position of a female head of family sound so appalling that any woman would desperately cling

to marriage rather than suffer this status. However, as noted above, women may often voluntarily choose to divorce their husbands, and may feel that their lives have improved as a result of divorce.

The reason is that the life of married mothers is no joy. Dependent wives often have little money of their own. It should be noted that 84 per cent of all people with no money income in the U S are women, most often dependent wives. A married woman has little community prestige, and little respect is shown to "just a housewife."²⁸ The authority of the man over her is often oppressive to her. A woman may have more power as a female head of household than she had as a female dependent of a male head of household. However limited her choices may be as an independent woman, they are less limited than the choices she had as a married woman. The problems of combining domestic work and paid work are just as difficult for married women who work. Many divorced women assert that they work less now. They had been doing all of the domestic work while married, and with the loss of the husband can give more attention to their children and have more leisure, because the husband is not demanding her services. They report themselves as happier and their children as happier, following divorce.

It would appear then that many women decrease their exploitation by divorcing their husbands. Many will prefer to do reproductive services for their children only, rather than for their husbands and children. Today women as well as men are often choosing to remain single and childless in order to avoid the costs and burdens of reproductive labour.

We are not witnessing the breakdown of the family, but the transformation of the family into industry-centred patriarchal capitalism. For many women the transformation appears to be a liberation, just as for men the opportunity to enter wage labour often appeared to be a liberation from the oppressions of the family farm. And indeed, both are a liberation from the oppression they suffered under the other system. However, capitalist exploitation is not liberation. If current developments were taken to their logical extremes, we would witness a system in which women did all of the domestic work at home unpaid and all of the service work in industry for low pay. Men would do all of the high-paying, more prestigious work and "buy" the women's services cheaply both at home and in the market.

Therefore we must return to the socialist-feminist principles outlined in the beginning. We have seen that the integration of women into the labour force under patriarchal capitalism does not end the oppression of women, but merely extends it in a different direction.²⁹ A return to family-centered patriarchy through the demand that men be paid enough to keep their wives at home is a step backwards, putting women back into domestic slavery. A socialist revolution that does not consider the patriarchal dialectic, that alters men's and women's relations to the means of production but not to domestic labour (the means of reproduction of family

life), will merely substitute patriarchal socialism for patriarchal capitalism and will continue the exploitation of women. The solution is to alter the relation of production to domestic work.

The work of reproduction, that is, the domestic services that maintain and support the population, must become the major priority of any socialist society. The value of creating and maintaining life must be recognized as equal to the value of producing goods and services in the market. Men must take on a full share of the domestic services of society instead of retaining themselves as the beneficiaries. Equal pay and equal work can and must be developed for men and women in wage labour. Women must have equal power and control over the economic system and over their own lives in order to assure their continued freedom under socialism. In sum, patriarchy has to be eliminated along with capitalism if women are to be free.

- ¹ Frederick Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. International Publishers, New York 1884.
- ² Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. Morrow, New York 1970.
- ³ Mariarosa Dalla Costa, "Women and the Subversion of the Community" and Selma James, "A Woman's Place," in *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. Falling Wall Press, Bristol, England 1972. See also Eli Zaretsky, "Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life", Numbers 13-16, *Socialist Revolution*, 1973.
- ⁴ Mao Tse-tung, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People*, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1966.
- ⁵ Amy Bridges and Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" (unpublished), Graduate Faculty of Economics, New School for Social Research, New York City 1975.
- ⁶ Karen Sacks, "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production and Private Property," in Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, *Women, Culture and Society*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1974.
- ⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol 1, International Publishers, New York, 1967.
- ⁸ Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto*, Henry Regenery, Chicago, 1954.
- ⁹ Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*, Kelly, New York 1969.
- ¹⁰ Robert Smuts, *Women and Work in America*, Columbia University Press, New York 1959.
- ¹¹ Hugh Carter and Paul C Glick, *Marriage and Divorce: A Social and Economic Study*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970.
- ¹² Franz Fanon, *From Colonialism to Liberation*, Grove Press, New York 1957.
- ¹³ Esther Boserup, *Women's Role and Economic Development*, Allen and Unwin, London 1970.
- ¹⁴ Mina Davis Caulfield, "Imperialism, the Family, and Cultures of Resistance" *Socialist Revolution*, October 1974.
- ¹⁵ Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1966.
- ¹⁶ Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*, Basic Books, New York 1975 (forthcoming).
- ¹⁷ Peter Freyer, *The Birth Controllers*, Stein and Day, New York 1966.
- ¹⁸ Valerie Oppenheimer, *The Female Labor Force in the US*, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, California 1970.

- 19 Juanita Kreps, *Sex in the Marketplace: American Women at Work*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Md. 1971.
- 20 Heidi Hartmann, *Women's Work in the Home and Capitalism*, (unpublished Ph D dissertation.) Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 1974.
- 21 Bridges and Hartmann, *op. cit.*
- 22 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol I *op. cit.*
- 23 Carter and Glick, *op. cit.*
- 24 William Domhoff, *The Higher Circles: The Governing Class in America*, Vintage Books, New York 1971.
- 25 Carol A Brown, Roslyn Feldberg, Elizabeth Fox and Janet Kohen, "Divorce: Chance of a New Lifetime." *Journal of Social Issues*, Winter 1975 (forthcoming).
- 26 Lee Rainwater and William L Yancy, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1967.
- 27 Ruth Brandwein, Carol A Brown and Elizabeth Fox, "Women and Children Last: The Social Situation of Divorced Mothers and their Families", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, August 1974.
- 28 Dair Gillespie, "Who Has the Power? The Marital Struggle." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, August, 1971.
- 29 *The Woman Question: Selections from the Writings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels. V I Lenin, Joseph Stalin*, International Publishers, New York 1971

GAIL OMVEDT

Rural Origins of Women's Liberation in India

THE YEARS after 1970, climaxing in International Women's Year of 1975, have seen a significant growth in militant and mass-based women's organizations in India. Not only is there a rising consciousness of women's special oppression, and "women's liberation" suddenly a respectable topic, but there is a significant turmoil at the very base of society, expressing itself in agitation and organization. New organizations have emerged in the last few years, from *Dalit* (untouchable) students to upper class cosmopolitans, from agricultural labourers to professional careerists. The older party fronts have been revitalized, with growing membership and widening network. And all have been pushed to greater radicalism, in rhetoric if not in action.

Among these developments, the growth of left and especially communist-led organizations are of most significance for the mass of toiling women and thus for a women's movement in the real sense of the term. The change is evident if we review briefly the growth of Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party India (Marxist). The CPI (M) probably has the largest mass-based women's organization in India. Operating at the state level, it has picked up a sizeable base among the rural poor in the last few years. In Tamil Nadu, the first conference of the Democratic Women's Union was held on 28 and 29

December 1974 in Tanjavur district, with a membership of 27,000, half of these from among the Harijan agricultural labourers of Tanjavur district itself. In West Bengal the Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti (Democratic Women's Organization) held its 14th state conference in April 1973 and proclaimed a notable growth especially among the peasantry and middle classes since the last conference in 1970. 121,632 members from all the districts except one were represented. In Kerala the Women's Federation has grown since 1969-70 to a membership of over 100,000. Its powerful base is Alleppey district where the agricultural labour movement is strong. The Shramik Mahila Sabha (Toiling Women's Organization) of Maharashtra has come to the forefront since 1974. It has its largest base outside Bombay, in the districts of Dhulia and Thana where there has been work among tribal agricultural labourers.¹

The CPI (M) has no national women's organization, and *People's Democracy* has published little in terms of reporting or ideological guidance in 1975. In contrast the CPI has long had a national organization, the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) and published plenty of material during the International Women's Year. These efforts at present seem mainly designed to draw women into support for the Congress Party as a major auxiliary in the fight against the "twin forces of imperialism and fascism"², and at its best the ideological approach remains infected with large elements of bourgeois ideology about "women's natural place". A republic day number article notes, "Nature has given women the responsibility of bearing and rearing children but it has given her other qualities and talents also."³ In spite of these differences at the top the pattern of growth of the CPI organizations seems to be similar to that of the CPI (M). The NFIW grew significantly between its 7th national conference in 1970 and its 8th conference in December of 1973 and new units were established in Maharashtra, Bangalore, Mysore, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu.⁴

Rising Tempo of Militancy

There is thus significant growth in the women's organizations of the major left parties. There have been new organizations as well from the Women's Anti-price-rise Front to the Progressive Organization of Women (POW) of Hyderabad. There are still significant limitations to all this: there is no sign as yet that the Left at an all-India level has seriously committed itself to building up a general mass-based women's liberation movement; there are no significant set of activists with a commitment to the women's movement as such on a broad scale; the ideological guidelines for organization as well as theory have only begun to be put forward. But the growth that has come up from the base is indicative of a very broad process of social change.

What is the reason behind this growth? These dramatic developments have coincided with the proclamation of IWY, but it would be an idealistic view of social processes to say that IWY or the influence of

external "women's liberation" themes has been the cause. IWY has resulted in many middle and upper-class-based meetings and programmes. Its existence has been useful for mass organizing—it lends legitimacy to be able to say that women all over the world are rising up, that the leaders of every country have recognized the special oppression of women and their rights to equality. But IWY by itself has done nothing and its detente-ish slogan of "equality, development and peace" tends to run counter to the growing tendency of women all over the world to fight for their rights.

IWY was proclaimed as a response to the rising women's movements in the west and to their growing trend to a socialist ideology; as a response to the militant participation by south-east Asian and African women in armed liberation struggles and their linking of national liberation with women's liberation. It is a reflection of the militancy at the base and, in part, an effort to co-opt it. Similarly, the growth of women's organizations in India—even among the middle classes—reflects a massive stirring at the very basis of society, a rising tempo of women's militancy and participation in mass struggles and, in the course of this participation, their rising consciousness of their own particular oppression and desire to fight it.

But the exact class structure, the shifting relations of production behind this must be analyzed carefully. Here the situation is different in India from the western countries, China in the 1920s and 1930s, and many Third World countries today.⁵

Participation in Social Production

The key factor is women's role in the work force. The woman who is only a housewife may be specially oppressed as a woman and deprived of her full human potential. She may share the class situation and oppression of her husband, but she does not generate a woman's movement. It is the women who participate in social production and experience not only a double oppression but also double work, who become the force behind general movements and women's movements. In India there is a significant variation in women's participation in the work force. There is regional-national variation: the participation is much higher in the south and west (and Maharashtra and Andhra have the highest rates of the non-hill states) and almost nil in the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. There is also a historical variation: women's participation has been declining over time as a result of the continuing neocolonial dependence and resulting economic stagnation and inability to use available labour power. Still, the basic pattern of this participation remains and can be described fairly simply: women are a significant factor as productive workers among the rural poor, but they are hardly to be found in the cities. They are not especially significant as yet among most sections of middle-class employees, and they are almost non-existent among the organized industrial working class.

Only six per cent of all working women are in the organized sector including both middle-class and working-class jobs. The remaining 14 per cent of non-agricultural working women are in low-paid, unorganized positions in small factories, contract work, bidi and similar household industries and domestic work. (Note that even though the 1971 census figures may be an underestimation of the actual number of working women those who are underestimated are even more overwhelmingly in the unorganized urban and rural sectors). In many industries where women have had a significant position in the past—such as textiles, jute, mines—this has been vanishing over the years. This lack of women workers in the organized and especially industrial work force is in contrast to the present situation in much of south-east Asia (where women fill up positions in many industries, especially textiles), and to the situation in China in the 1920s (where women formed a significant proportion of factory workers but did not have much role in field work). It also contrasts with Latin America where women participate more in urban work but not in agricultural labour. Thus while Indian women workers have always had a tradition of militancy (from the millworkers' struggles of the 1930s and 1940s down to the present) it has been difficult for them to play a leading role.

The situation is different in the rural areas. Of all working women 50 per cent are agricultural labourers, 30 are poor peasant cultivators. As noted above it is in the rural areas especially that census figures may be an underestimation of actual work participation. In fact, though middle and rich peasant families may prefer to keep their women in the home and in "semi-feudal" bondage, among the rural poor throughout most of India women labour in the fields as they have done for generations. The fate of women—a women's movement—in India is thus particularly bound up with the fate of the rural poor.

Rural Poor Assert Themselves

Prior to independence the main contradiction in Indian rural society was between peasants as a whole (including the rich, poor, even landless) and the semi-feudal landlords, merchants and bureaucrats who were the allies of British rule. After independence as a result of limited land reforms, a partial movement against the worst semi-feudal excesses and the development of green revolution technology, this situation began to change. A section of rich peasants emerged, developing as capitalist farmers and consolidating with the remaining landlords to form the ruling class in the villages. Poor peasants became pauperized; while various forms of "semi-feudal" dependence (debt bondage, sharecropping) remained, landlessness increased and the agricultural labour class began to emerge as an increasingly self-conscious section. More and more the basic contradiction became that between the poor and landless peasants on the one hand, and rich peasants and landlords (including both semi-feudal and capitalist) on the other. The rural poor began to assert themselves as the motive force in all rural

struggles and rich peasants deserted the Kisan Sabhas. When these began to revive after 1965, they were made up primarily of poor peasants. New agricultural labour unions also began to emerge. In many ways the Bihar famine of 1966 and the Naxalbari revolt of 1967 signalled the beginning of this shift. But it was not until the renewed famine days and struggles after 1970 that the rural poor began to be the significant focus of agitations and struggles.

This assertion of the rural poor meant also the emergence of women and of Dalits (Harijans and Adivasis) who make up the majority of poor peasants and wage labourers. But women in movements of agricultural labour and poor peasantry did not simply come forward as disembodied representatives of a class. They came forward as doubly oppressed members of that class which had to endure special burdens: housework as well as agricultural work that was always more poorly paid than that of men; and the inferior position in society (the scandalously low sex ratio in most parts of India is mainly a reflection of the fact that girl babies are given less food and care than boys). They had to endure the weight of various kinds of traditional bondage, dowry, the subordination to the authority of men, bondages which remained even though they were less heavy among the rural poor than among the rich and higher castes. If low caste and Dalit they were considered sexual prey for high-caste landlords. All these burdens were bound together in their lives. To fight the class battles they had to fight also their oppression as women; to have the right to work at a decent wage meant the freedom to go out of the house; to take part in organizing required some release from home burdens; to realize their potential as half the working class meant a struggle against male domination within that class. All this of course was equally true for working-class women, rich peasants and middle-class employees and housewives but because women were less represented in the urban work force, the question of their participation in movements was not so pressing. So women were militant in occasional battles of urban workers but were never involved in union leadership. Women were so few in the unions any way. However, the issue could hardly be ignored so easily in the case of the rural poor.

Communist Women's Organizations in Maharashtra

In this way the increasing assertion of poor peasants and agricultural labourers has brought the "women question" to the forefront. The emergence of women as a significant factor in the agitation of the rural poor especially since 1970 has been the base of the developing women's movement. Maharashtra provides the most outstanding example.

Since this article focuses on mass-based, left-led and particularly communist-led women's organizations, a historical background is necessary. There was in fact almost nothing that could be called a communist-led women's movement prior to 1970. In contrast to Vietnam (where the Indochina Communist Party established a women's union in the year of

its own founding, 1930) and to China (where leaders like Mao recognized the importance of women in the anti-feudal struggle from the beginning)⁶ this task has been neglected in India.

The general tendency of the communist movement has been to take a "liquiationist" stand—to recognize women's issues only as class issues and to use women as a ladies' auxiliary to the general movement.⁷

This can be clearly seen in the case of Maharashtra and Bombay. There was no separate women's organization of the CPI before independence. When communists joined the Congress Socialist Party and worked within the Congress, their women also began to work within the All-India Women's Congress (AIWC). Here they played a major role, taking up the demands of lower middle class and toiling women, and giving a militant mass character to the organization. During the war they allied themselves with the Congress women inside the AIWC against its upper class and pro-British members: they organized women and brought them on to the streets for the first time in agitations for food, kerosene and other facilities; and as a result many women were attracted to the party.

After 1948 there was a split inside the AIWC as in other mass organizations, and communists were expelled from the AIWC. There was some immediate effort to continue organizing. In Bombay, for instance, a Shramik Mahila Parishad (Toiling Women's Conference) was held in 1949, the first effort to rally working-class women, and it drew over two hundred delegates and some four to five thousand women in a rally.

Delegates for Belgrade

But there was no effort to form an all-India communist-led women's organization, and for the party as a whole the women's issue was dropped. In Maharashtra, some women who were close to the CPI kept up the theme; Shantabai Mukherji, the wife of a communist trade union activist ran a magazine for a time called *Shramik Mahila*, and this was the focus for a certain amount of effort. But women members of the party were sent elsewhere, primarily into direct trade union work. "Sometimes when I used to find time I would go to women's meetings," was how one long-time activist put it.⁸ This was clearly not a party-directed effort, or a programme that had any priority. In 1955-56 the NFIW was formed as an all-India organization, but there was no Maharashtra or even Bombay unit established.

In 1963, finally, the Shramik Mahila Parishad was organized as a Maharashtra unit of the NFIW and on 8 March 1964 it held a conference in Bombay, which was described as the first session of the Shramik Mahila Parishad or Sabha, the first official party effort. But the main purpose of this, say old activists, was to send some delegates to the International Democratic Women's Conference in Belgrade. The CPI here was responding to an international demand and not taking an initiative of its own. Dange is said to have made his intentions clear: "I'm a short-sighted man—you may have long-term goals in mind, but you

have to organize to send delegates to the conference."

The implication was that after that the party could forget it, and it did. In spite of the fact that the conference was a success, and about 15,000 women, mostly working class, gathered for the march, the women's organization was not maintained or developed. From 1964 until 1973-74 there was no communist-led women's organization functioning in Maharashtra.

Why was this? The central problem seems to have been the policy of the party leadership as revealed in this remark: "Our main grievance is that the party has never taken an interest in organizing women on their own basis." A CPI activist has defended Dange by saying that he was interested in women, but "he always stressed working women; he referred to the 'women's departments' of unions in Europe and what useful role they played during strikes"—and this was in fact the "liquidationist" tendency: women's problems were seen only as workers' problems; their main role was as auxiliary to general class struggle. And these themes pervaded all sections of the communist movement. There was no consideration of the special barriers to participation of women and it was felt that it was not appropriate to organize around "social" issues. Housework? — "oh; that's hardly an issue we can take up" either as a demand for public facilities or in terms of asking male comrades to share some of the burden. Equal wages? not so relevant because "after all it's the family income that's important." And so on. There was a tendency to say, "How can we organize the women when we have barely begun to reach the men?" without the recognition that there were ways in which men themselves could be organized through organizing women.

Years of Famine

What changed this, perhaps decisively, was the Maharashtra "drought," the famine years of 1970-73, the most severe in history even in this food-deficit state. Fifteen to thirty million people out of a total population of fifty million were affected. In some districts there was continuous drought over the three years. The most affected districts were those of western Maharashtra, the region which had also produced the most solid rich peasant strata on which the Congress Party had laid its political base, the region of kulak-controlled cooperatives and a certain amount of entrepreneurial capitalist agriculture with a degree of development of an agricultural labourer class. The effect of all this was to generate a massive rural unrest, which provoked the Maharashtra state government to institute the largest scale famine relief work programme ever seen in India. Relief work employment beginning in 1971 reached a peak in 1973 when nearly 5 million of the rural poor were given jobs, primarily at "metal-breaking" (stone-crushing).⁹

It is important to emphasize that this relief work programme as well as other measures of the government during the famine period was in response to the fear of rural unrest. After all it had been a Maharashtrian,

Y B Chavan, with deep roots in the western Maharashtra peasant districts who had been the first to voice the fear that the "green revolution" might "turn into a red one." And important administrators admitted, "it is on the cards that a violent upheaval would inevitably have occurred had it not been for the foresight of the administration in providing work for the needy."¹⁰ Therefore the famine work projects were started and the government made a promise of work to those who demanded it (*magel tyala kam* became the theme of the period) but the result of the relief works in turn was to draw out massive numbers of the rural poor into a collective work experience which in turn intensified their class consciousness.

It may be noted that the Bihar famine of 1966 (perhaps more severe in its effects) was not accompanied by any significant mass movements. In the case of most famines since, the tendency even of the left party papers, *New Age* and *People's Democracy*, has been to give reporting stress on the misery of the people and the inadequacy of government efforts, rather than on revolts and agitations. In contrast, the pages of both papers in reporting on the Maharashtra famine by late 1972 and 1973 were filled with accounts of struggles, *bandhs*, *gheraos*, riots and agitations. However, the most complete statistical information has been given in *Gramin Shramik* (Rural Toiler), the Lal Nishan rural paper covering all varieties of rural struggles. It might be useful here to summarize the available data.

United Struggle

The period of struggle was inaugurated by a united left conference of 8000 agricultural labourers and poor peasants held in Srirampur (Ahmednagar district) in February 1970 and then by a march in Bombay of 30,000 tribals, poor peasants and workers on 4 March. Following this, between March and December 1970 there were a total of some 34 demonstrations, marches, strikes and meetings involving 53,000 people. Then from January to October 1971 a total of 157,618 of the rural poor were listed as participating in 66 actions of all kinds, including marches, *gheraos*, road closings (the first appearance of these) and one simultaneous demonstration of 50,000 poor peasants before 119 taluka government offices on May 1. Approximately another 120,000 took part in agitations,¹¹ in the six months before February 1973 but the detailed reporting stopped as the struggle was heating up. However according to a government source, in the first 8 months of 1973 there were 1529 marches, 171 processions, 97 *bandhs* and 52 *gheraos*, a significant leap in the numbers of actions and correspondingly of people involved. 27,000 persons had to be "arrested or restrained" for breaches of the law.¹² Finally came 15 and 16 May 1973, with one of the most widespread and united actions in the history of Maharashtra, perhaps of India. On 15 May with five left parties (Lal Nishan, CPI, CPI (M), Socialist, Peasants and Workers) taking part, a million and a half rural workers on the relief projects struck work, and on 16 May the communist parties organized a supporting strike of some 500,000 Bombay workers.¹³

These actions were organized by the left parties and around demands ranging from the takeover of forest lands to organizing specially affected groups (as the tribals) to the basic underlying issues of food (price rise and a demand for ration food) and work. However, the crucial fact was that in all of this the women, poor peasant and agricultural labourer women, were taking an increasingly prominent role. And their militancy was noted by everyone, from government officials to left organizers. Subramaniam, author of the pro-government famine study, notes that women were more aggressive and persistent in demanding facilities on the relief works.¹⁴ It was the women of Ahmednagar district, a CPI activist recalls, who took the initiative in starting "road closings" as a new form of direct agitation. It was the tribal women, according to the young male organizers of the Shramik Sanghathana in Dhulia district, who were the most tenacious, the last to compromise in a gherao and the first to take direct action on such issues as *daru* (alcohol). "The women were the first" in militancy and activity, asserted an independent organizer of a tax-refusal movement in turbulent Valva taluka of Sangli district, where village self-defence squads formed when the villagers rebelled against the lack of roads and developmental aid. "It was the women who were in the forefront—they were the first to break through the police lines, the first to fight", remarked Lal Nishan organizers. As Ahilya Rangnekar said, "When women take part in the movement, its quality is different. Women are more militant, more lasting and have a tenacity to fight..."

Fighting Spirit

The reason for the militancy was simple. The double oppression always faced by toiling women was heightened during the famine period. Here they were forced, for a meagre pay, and much less than the men, to work on backbreaking jobs under the hot sun while in addition they had to care for their homes and their children as they had always done, but under conditions where it became increasingly difficult to procure even the minimum of food for cooking. Women faced their oppressors both at the point of production and at the point of consumption: landlords and rich peasants in the fields or often corrupt supervisors on the job; and they were also the ones to directly face the exploiting merchants, rising prices and often absolute unavailability of food. With the famine and its relief projects it was not only the low-caste field labourers who were involved but also women of "respectable" middle peasant families who came out of their homes, sometimes for the first time, to labour with others. More heavily exploited, and exploited at every point, it is no wonder that the women were more aroused and more militant than the men.

This militancy was recognized by the administration. It lay behind the fact that relief works were promised to women (*magel tyala kam* included *magel tila kam*!) as well as to men; and it lay behind the declarations that men and women would receive equal wages on the relief works from 15.

April 1973 onwards. Then the right to equal wages and the right to work itself were extended generally when the government initiated the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) which promised work to those who demanded it, including women. Later the Minimum Wages Act was finally extended to agriculture in November 1974 with a fixed Rs 3 minimum for 7 hours' work for men and women equally. Whether Rs 3 is a living wage, whether the EGS is any long-term solution and whether even these reformist measures can be implemented by the present regime are different questions. The important fact is that it was first in the rural areas that the most important rights of women—the right to have productive work, and the right to receive equal wages even when specific tasks are different, as in agriculture—were recognized in principle. And this recognition was itself a result of the women's participation in rural agitations and a victory for the democratic movement of the people.

Against Price-rise

The left parties were also taking note of the women's role. Though there were no separate campaigns for equal rates, the demands of the parties and unions and of the Landless-Agricultural Labourer-Poor Peasant Conference included one for equal wages for men and women both in agriculture and on the relief works. "During the latter part of the third year of the drought," a government spokesman notes, "the demand for equal wages for men and women which had been voiced for long, began to grow in intensity".¹⁵ The issue of women's special oppression began to be noted and stressed in speeches and occasional articles for rural activists, and organizers began to call on women activists and wives of activists to take part in tours and meetings and speak to the rural women. Still it was in the cities rather than the rural areas that the first specifically women's fighting organization was formed. This was the United Women's Anti-price-rise Committee, organized on 3 October 1972 in Dadar, Bombay.

The Anti-price-rise Committee was an outgrowth of the famine agitation in two ways. First of all, as the theme of rural struggles it was anti-price rise rather than demand for work and wages that could be most easily extended to the rural areas. The CPI and CPI (M) had for much of the period a tendency to focus their demands on the consumption issues of food and price-rise, while Lal Nishan tended to focus more on the demand for work.¹⁶ Secondly, many of the communist and socialist organizers were women who had experienced at first hand the militancy of the rural women in tours and campaigns in the rural areas. Mrinal Gore, the socialist leader, was touring in Ahmednagar and Bhir and elsewhere in late 1972 and 1973. They returned to their city homes with the confidence that rural women could act with the same tenacity and fighting spirit. As a Poona organizer noted, the famine agitations were their "first experience of women's organized strength as women." There were few left activists in the

countryside but there were some in the cities where they started organizing.

The Anti-price-rise Committee was part of the trend towards left unity that was developing by the end of 1972. Indeed it was the first solid organizational expression of the trend, the Trade Union Joint Action Committee and the Sangarsha Samiti having been formed on a stable basis in late 1973 and early 1974. Its leading members were from the Socialist Party, CPI (M) and CPI in Bombay, and from other parties (Lal Nishan, Peasants and Workers) in the district towns. By the end of 1974, however, the CPI had begun its withdrawal from this as from other united fronts. After its first meeting the women had two actions in the same month, a *dharna* of 1000, and a *satyagraha* of 3000, and then went ahead through 1973 with alternating programmes of *gheraos* and marches. The *gheraos* brought out 30 to 40 women to surround top capitalists (the president of the Oil and Steel Merchants Association, the managers of Lever Brothers and of the Tatas were threatened) and Ministers (Chief Minister Vasant Rao Naik of Bombay state and his Civil Supplies Minister, and Y B Chavan and Mrs Gandhi). The marches brought out over 25,000 women into the streets, brandishing their rolling-pins and beating their *thalis*.

Chain Reaction

The Anti-price-rise Committee had severe limitations as a "women's movement." It was limited to urban women, mainly in Bombay and some of the district towns; and it was not really focused on the root problems of women as such but rather on the single issue of price-rise and related consumption issues (like availability of foodgrains). But its achievements were significant. It was a militant left united front, thus breaking the pattern by which women's organizations were splintered as "fronts" of every left party. It channelled the developing anger of the people which up to that point in Bombay had been turned against the small shopkeepers by the Shiv Sena, and turned it against the big capitalists and the state. It brought women on to the streets in militant demonstrations, proving again to the left leaders that urban middle-class and working class women could be aggressive in *gheraos* as workers, and militant in action as the rural women had already shown themselves. And this, along with the fighting participation of women textile workers and workers' wives in the big, bitter strike of January 1974, was crucial. Inevitably, the special problems and needs of women came into focus.

It was after the rural workers' massive general strike on 16 May and the Anti-price-rise Committee's rolling-pin march of Diwali that the CPI and CPI (M) reactivated their women's fronts. On 17 and 18 November 1973, the second session of the Shramik Mahila Parishad, controlled by the CPI but involving women from Lal Nishan and the Peasants and Workers' Party, was held in Karad, Satara district. It brought to its session agricultural labourers and industrial workers who had taken part in both rural demands for work and urban anti-price-rise

agitation. For the first time since 1964 it could be said that a women's organization of the CPI was in existence in Maharashtra. Similarly, the CPI (M) moved to establish its organization, the Shramik Mahila Sabha, with a conference in January 1974 in Bombay. Outside of Bombay and the areas where Ahilya Rangnekar was working, the main units of SMS were found among the tribals in Dhulia and Thana districts organized by Sharad Patil and Godavari Parulekar, and among workers in Ichalkaranj.

Liberation on the Agenda

And more developments began to happen. *Magowa*, an independent Marxist journal brought out perhaps the first women's liberation issue of a left magazine in September 1973. The articles reflected not only the problems of middle-class women who constituted its main readership, but also the role of tribal women in Shahada (Dhulia district) who had become famous for their role in the general movement and their special work of smashing alcoholism. In Shahada the affiliated activists had begun to hold study camps for the women. Among the neo-Buddhists, the Dalit Panthers were emerging as the main organization of youth, but their educated girls were stirring also, and perhaps the first student organization in Maharashtra to express a militant feminist position was the Mahila Samta Sainik Dal (League of Women Soldiers for Equality) formed among Buddhist students in Milind College in Aurangabad. The Lal Nishan Party, which had never had a women's unit before, brought out a Women's Liberation special issue (the first such issue of a communist political paper) on 8 March 1975, and joined with students and the CPI women in organizing a Women's Day March, the first time when hundreds of working-class women in Poona took part in a demonstration that focused on their needs as women. The Indochina Victory Day marchers of 17 April and 1 May in Poona brought with them special slogans hailing the victory of the fighting women of Vietnam, Cambodia and Africa. Socialist leader Baba Adhav turned his attention to the problems of *devadasis*—girls from poor and mainly untouchable village families sold into prostitution under the cover of religion, and a Devadasi Conference was held at Gadhinglax, near Kolhapur, in September.

But the climax of all these efforts was the United Women's Liberation Struggle Conference (Samyukta Stri Mukti Sangarsha Parishad) held in Poona on 18 and 19 October which admitted all observers. It was indeed strikingly new in bringing together women of all social classes, and especially toiling women, in an atmosphere of relative equality. More than this it was an effort to begin at a state level what had not yet been done at an all-India level—to build a women's liberation movement that would deal with not only the basic issues of all oppressed women but also the needs and power of toiling women, especially agricultural labourers, and to build it as a united effort with participation from all working-class-based parties.

Seven hundred women attended the conference, 350 from outside

Poona. Of these, two-thirds were agricultural labourers and urban workers, the largest group being 65 agricultural labourers from the Shramik Sanghathana in Dhulia district who had collected 50 rupees each from others in their village to come as representatives to the conference. Other agricultural labourers came from Ahmednagar, Kolhapur, other parts of Dhulia and Poona district itself, some braving the threats of officials who had warned them against participating. They surprised the middle-class participants by their frequent eloquence in speaking of needs and struggles. Textile workers from Bombay, ginning and pressing workers, bank employees and clerks, housewives and students also came, and from Poona itself Dalit municipal sweepers and factory workers mingled with professors, clerks and students.

In the organizing of the conference the main role had been played by the Lal Nishan Party, a number of independent radicals and women and activists associated with the *Magowa*—Shramik Sanghathana group. A number of factors, including disruptions of the last couple of months, had prevented broader participation. Towards the end of the conference, women from CPI (M), the Socialist Party and even the Republican Party had become involved and joined in supporting the main resolution, and the glimmer of a broader left mass-based unity was visible.

Freedom Road

The main demand dominating the discussions at the conference was the right of women to work, to participation in socially productive labour. Every aspect of women's oppression and women's needs was dealt with: opposition to dowry, fight against the ravages of alcoholism, anger at the atrocities committed against poor women, especially Dalits and tribals, and nurses and village volunteers isolated in the villages. But the most unifying theme was the right of women to have a full share in all fields of production and public and political life, the right to have some basis of economic independence that would give them the strength to fight the customary bondage and special oppression. Even the devadasi movingly described the hardships and religious superstitions that forced untold thousands of girls into slavery, and how it was difficult for her to oppose the custom thoroughly because she was still dependent on it for a livelihood. "If you give me alternative work I can stand up against anything", she said.

The main focus was on agricultural labourers and toiling women. As all women face oppression and need liberation, the movement is for all. But the main strength lay in the vast majority of working women, factory workers who had experienced struggle and could help organize others, most of all the 2,500,000 or more Maharashtrian women agricultural labourers who were beginning to organize themselves. It was in this conference that the militancy, determination and basic strength of the rural poor women (which had emerged during the famine period, and underlay the growth of all left organizations

with a mass base among women) began to express itself in the context of a broad women's movement. And along with the focus on toiling women was the explicit recognition of the connection of the women's movement with the working class and all oppressed sections, a recognition that while perhaps women needed a separate organization, their needs could be achieved only through revolutionary social change and the establishment of a socialist society.

The conference did not create a solidified organization. A kind of "communications committee" was formed to exchange information about work going on in a variety of places. The aim from the very beginning had been not to build an organization but to give thrust and direction to a movement. Most of those attending seemed to feel that in some significant way this had been achieved. There was a new voice of women that was beginning to be heard in the speeches of both labourers and students. In contrast with the peace dove (women's symbol of IWY) and rolling-pin (of the Anti-price rise-Front,) the badge of the conference was the clenched fist with the slogan "Unity *zindabad*" that had become the mark of the largest organized section of women, the Shahada tribal labourers. And a new burst of creative energy among young women and men found expression in poems and poster exhibitions and the new songs of the conference. These songs were sung not only by the tribal labourers but also by young housewives and workers from Bombay who were beginning to realize that their struggle was a fundamental one and that it was bound up with the total movement for the liberation of society. While the building of a women's organization and movement lay ahead, the real objectives were not lost even in the rhymes and rhythms of poetry:

Hear us, O hear us,
 The age of oppression will be over now.
 Mother Ganga, mother Jamuna will not have to meet the sea;
 No girl, no mother will have any fear of men.
 The age of oppression will be over now:
 On the earth the toilers will not be bound in chains,
 And each woman will have the right to work alongside of men.
 Hear us, O hear us,
 The age of oppression will be over now.

¹ See *People's Democracy*, 30 January 1972; 29 April 1973; 19 January 1975; and interviews.

² See for instance the coverage of women and the photograph of volunteers at the Vijayawada session in *New Age* dated 9 February 1975. From the beginning of IWY the CPI-led Indian Committee for International Women's Year has been working closely with the government-led National Committee for International Women's Year; see almost any issue of *New Age*, especially that dated 23 February 1975.

³ *New Age*, 26 January 1975.

⁴ *New Age*, 16 December 1973.

- ⁵ The basic facts about the patterns of work participation of women in India and other aspects of their position have been summarized in numerous places by now and are well known: see among other sources the Status of Women Commission Report. For a broad international comparison Esther Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development* is still the most comprehensive and useful. For the case of China see, among others, the Women's Special Issue of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, January-March 1975.
- ⁶ On Vietnam see especially Arlene Bergman, *Women in Vietnam*, San Francisco 1975, and Mai Thi Tu, *Vietnamese Women: Yesterday and Today*, Association of Vietnamese Students in Canada, 1973. On China, see the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, *op. cit.*, and Marilyn Young, (Ed), *Women in China*, University of Michigan 1972.
- ⁷ To take secondary contradictions (women's oppression, and caste oppression) as primary would be a "right" deviation; to ignore secondary contradictions altogether and treat class as the only contradiction has been called a "liquidationist" or "left deviationist" tendency.
- ⁸ Quotes are from interviews except where otherwise indicated.
- ⁹ For a comprehensive statistical overview see V Subramaniam, *Parched Earth, The Maharashtra Drought 1970-73*, Government of Maharashtra, 1975.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 40.
- ¹¹ *Gramin Shramik*, 1 December 1971 (Belwandi session special issue) and 15 February 1973.
- ¹² Subramaniam, *op. cit.*, p 411.
- ¹³ *New Age*, 3 June 1973; *Peoples' Democracy*, 27 May 1973. Lal Nishan and CPI (M) sources agree on the 1½ million figure: CPI cites 3 million but this is undoubtedly an overestimation.
- ¹⁴ Subramaniam, *op. cit.* pp 433, 469.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p 404.
- ¹⁶ See *New Age*, *People's Democracy* and *Gramin Shramik* for this period. More interestingly, after June, while CPI (M) tended to project an extension of the demand for "food and work" on an all-India scale (*People's Democracy*, 27 May 1973) the CPI shifted to a "dehoarding" campaign, which was not felt by government to be so much of a threat since its immediate targets were the merchants rather than the administration; See Subramaniam, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
- ¹⁷ For the first time the basic issue of women's liberation was coming into prominence—abolition of the sexual division of labour by which women were limited to "home and children" while men held a monopoly on productive labour.

MARTIN OPPENHEIMER

*Women Office Workers: Petty-Bourgeoisie or
New Proletarians?*

TO NO other social strata have so many contradictory missions been assigned than to the white collar strata. To some, the upper categories of managers, officials, professionals, and technical workers represent the dawn of a new age of philosopher-kings, or conversely the conquest of humanity by a dismal, pervasive bureaucracy. To others, this same upper fractile suggests a new phase of human development, neither capitalist nor socialist. Still others see at least one group at the upper levels as having the inherent capacity to rule or to ruin—the owners! Lower down, about the remaining mass of white collarites, equally conflicting notions prevail: as constituting the underpinning to totalitarian movements mainly of the Right, possibly also of the Left or may be the tail-end of whatever fashionable current comes along, usually the wrong kind and most likely fascism; as representing a new middle class, neither traditional nor proletarian, reflecting the consensus of a relatively conflictless, affluent, post-industrial society; as fathering a student stratum which will constitute a vanguard force to lead the class to revolutionary change; as the breeding ground for a new cultural grouping which will revolutionize society by dropping out and creating new cultural forms; and as either alone or in tandem with the blue-collar working class, becoming a new proletariat to perform the historic mission of overthrowing capitalist society.

At the risk of some oversimplification, we can isolate from the rather large and mixed-bag literature on white collarites in the US and elsewhere three core missions assigned to them: (1) an elite or managerial mission, in which at least some elements of the white-collar strata are to become, to the extent that they not already are, the enlightened and efficient rulers of society; (2) a middle-class stabilizing mission, in which most people in the labour force will achieve "middle class" life styles, and in which most jobs will become either white collar or skilled blue collar to the degree that collar colour would not matter, that is, a mission in which democratic government reflects a middle-class (white-collar) majority; and (3) a class struggle mission in which at least some white-collar groupings will move Leftward to join or displace the blue-collar proletariat as the major lever for change, even as some other white-collar groupings may move towards the Right.

Fundamental Questions

Let us remove the debate from the realms of abstraction or from the historical and theoretical, level, and project the issues into the concrete present using the opportunity provided by the hitherto largely neglected occupational stratum that is also sex-linked, namely, women office workers, and examine two fundamental questions: Are women office workers "working class" or "middle class"?; What is the significance of women office workers as a social, economic and political phenomenon? In the endeavour this article will examine five areas:

- 1 What are women office workers, in terms of definition and in the context of social class theory?
- 2 How has this stratum come to occupy its present historical position?
- 3 What is the size and position of this social category relative to the rest of the labour force?
- 4 What is the present condition of women office workers?
- 5 What are some of the social and political implications of this condition and in particular its impact on the women's movement, and trade unionism?

The basic thesis of this article is that the woman office worker is a proletarian by her position as a wage-earner, her status as an indirect contributor to the generation of surplus-value, the conditions of her servitude in the modern office-factory (including her vulnerability to the fluctuations of the labour market), the actions she takes to protect her status at the workplace, and at least to a significant degree, her relationship to other sectors of the working class through her family ties. Further, her being a woman introduces a second oppressive condition to overlay her first exploitative one. The prognosis, it will be argued, is that when these two factors are combined, a politically volatile mixture can, potentially, result.

For the purposes of this discussion, an office worker will be defined any person listed under the "clerical" category by the US Bureau of the

Census, including such occupations as library assistants, physicians, office attendants, bank tellers, book keepers, cashiers, bill collectors, vehicle dispatchers, railway mail clerks, file clerks, insurance adjusters, messengers and office boys (sic), office machine operators, payroll clerks, postal clerks, receptionists, secretaries, shipping clerks, stenographers, storekeepers, telegraph operators, telephone operators, ticket agents and typists, plus sales workers who work in an office-like context, especially retail sale clerks who work primarily around office machinery.

Reckoning only the clerical category, 35.5 per cent of all employed women are in this stratum; adding sales which is admittedly a vaguer category, 42.5 per cent of all employed women do some form of office work. Not included here is the type of office work done by those in professional occupations, for example, librarians.

By contrast, 21.5 per cent of all employed women are considered "service workers" (mainly in private households), and 10.8 per cent are blue collar operatives. Service workers should not be confused with workers in the "services sector", which includes not only a range of personal services such as hairdressing, repair work and the like, but also wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and sometimes government. Much of the work in the services sector, especially in government, consists of office work. While 5.2 million women were employed in manufacturing in January 1975, 6.9 million were in wholesale and retail trade, 2.2 million in finance, insurance and real estate, 7.5 million in personal services, and 6.7 million in government (including over 0.75 million in federal service, nearly 1.4 million in state government, and 4.5 million in local government. The latter category includes, of course, school teachers).

Class or Stratum?

In what ways are these women "workers", that is, members of a working *class* as distinct from being simply an occupational stratum which can be distinguished from "blue collar operatives," let us say, by the fact that they do "non-manual" labour for the most part? The assumption here is that while "class" may involve a stratum or strata of occupations, something more is involved. A "class" is identifiable by (a) a common position relative to the means of production and distribution, that is, a common source of income based on the relationship between an individual and the economic mode of production; (b) an interest different from and sometimes hostile to that of other classes, because of the different position relative to the economic system; (c) consequent separate life-styles; and, (d) according to some theorists, a consciousness of membership in that class and a political organization which expresses that consciousness.¹

Seen in this Marxian perspective women office workers constitute part of the working class, first because one dimension of their relationship to the economic system is that of selling their labour power in return for a wage while producing surplus-value which is appropriated by another

class, namely, the bourgeoisie. Marx said:

The commercial labourer does not produce any surplus value directly...His wages are therefore not necessarily in proportion to the mass of profits, which he helps the capitalist to realize...He adds to the income of the capitalist not by creating any direct surplus-value, but by helping him to reduce the costs of the realization of surplus-value. In so doing, he performs partly unpaid labour.²

Today the notion of a worker who "produces" surplus-value and another who (merely) helps "realize" it may be somewhat outdated. For it is hardly possible to separate the primary (extractive), secondary (manufacturing) and tertiary (service) sectors in the contemporary integrated economic system. "Production" has become a society-wide phenomenon in which all wage earners who are socially necessary to the process (those who cannot be dispensed with under current conditions) and who are not paid the value of what they produce, participate at some level in the creation or realization of surplus-value. The woman office worker, even in the public sector, contributes to the creation or realization of surplus-value also, by performing a service which even when paid for by taxes (that is, by other workers) contributes to the functioning of government, and, indirectly, to the functioning of those interests which government overwhelmingly serves and protects. A Marxist, assuming that government represents the overall interests of the capitalist system, would therefore conclude that women office workers, private or public, indeed are a part of the proletariat by virtue of their relationship to the economic system, and that this relationship must, in the long run at least, be antagonistic to those interests who derive their income from what they, the workers, have created and helped to realize.

Working-class Connection

Many though not all women office workers are proletarian in yet another way: by the social nature of family life, for large proportions of lower-strata white-collar women are married to blue-collar men. It must be clearly stated that it is not the man's class that determines the woman's. Rather, the man's class is a component of the social milieu in which the woman lives, just as it is possible that the blue-collar man's life is less traditionally working class when his wife is white-collar. However, we have little data on how this relationship works. We do know that the phenomenon of large numbers of white-collar women being married to blue-collar men is a function of family income, for the likelihood of a woman being in the official labour force is associated with the level of a husband's income whether or not there is a husband living with the family at all. More than half of women who have families but no husbands were in the labour force in 1967; about 37 per cent of wives living with husbands worked³.

The argument, in brief, is that proportionally more women work, regardless of the nature of the jobs when their husbands have incomes

in the blue-collar ranges. Thus the highest percentage of wives in the labour force in 1967 was among women whose husband's incomes ranged between \$5000 and \$7000: 43 per cent. The percentages then decrease, roughly, as husband's incomes range downward and upward. One hypothesis as to why the percentages decrease downward is that although income is needed, lower skill levels bring in lower wages, which makes working only marginally useful. Mainstream working-class women tend to have high school education which qualify them for the somewhat more satisfying clerical jobs; lesser educated women tend to become manual or service workers, and tend to be less satisfied with their work, with consequences for commitment to being in the labour force.

Given the large proportion of working wives who have clerical jobs it is not surprising that they will have husbands throughout the labour force, and conversely, that in virtually every category of husband's work, large percentages of wives will be clericals.

In sum, about 2.3 million working clerical wives have various categories of white collar husbands, while just over two million have various categories of blue-or gray-collar husbands, a minority, but just barely⁴. While family connection is but one variable in examining a person's social class milieu or life-style, there is a rather extensive sociological literature arguing that "one's job is the watershed down which the rest of one's life tends to flow" regardless of whether the job is the husband's or the wife's.

Feminine Dimension

In addition to the working-class nature of the office worker, the woman office worker must also be considered in her feminine dimension. The debate as to the "nature" of women in terms of social category is broad and far-reaching.⁵ While it is by no means a settled issue, several things are clear. First, occupations are not distributed randomly throughout any nation's ethnic make-up, and the same thing is true of the sex differential. Thus, in the case of women as in the case of ethnic groups, there has developed historically a "caste-like" picture, both overall (in terms of the occupational profile of the group under study as contrasted to other groups) and within each social class, in that the group under study has a profile within the class that is different from that of other groups. Females then "can be viewed as constituting caste-like groupings within social classes."⁶ Obviously the term caste is meant not in a literal sense, but in a symbolic or analogous sense.

While it is true that women constitute neither a caste nor a class, it is equally true that one cannot begin to discuss the situation of women in America without reference to the fact that women who are officially in the labour force are disproportionately office workers and more generally white-collar workers. It follows that one cannot understand the phenomenon of the contemporary white-collar worker without reference to the fact that the worker is likely to be a woman. In 1970, women constituted 37.7 per cent of the labour force, they were 39.8 per cent of all

professional and technical workers, 38 per cent of all sales workers, 73.5 per cent of all clerical workers, and 16.5 per cent of managers and administrative workers. Overall, they constituted approximately 47.8 per cent of all white-collar workers; 63.4 per cent of all women in the labour force were in the white collar occupations. This situation is analogous to that of Black Americans who while not being a class cannot be understood except with reference to the fact that their population is disproportionally working class and sub-proletarian in composition. To extend the analogy further one cannot understand the American working class today without reference to its heavily Black composition.⁷

Still another circumstance which impinges upon the caste-like composition of women workers is the problem of the housewife category. Virtually all working women who are wives and/or mothers are also housewives; and virtually all women not in the official labour force are housewives. The question of what class a housewife in the labour force is in, is perhaps less intriguing than the issue of what, if any, class she is in if she is not in the labour force. Traditionally it has been assumed that she is either in no class since she does not sell her labour power for wages, or at least to all appearances, produce or realize surplus-value, or she is in the class of the man to whom she is attached by virtue of life-style: a proposition supported in part by the discussion of the importance of the woman office worker's husband's stratum as an index to her membership in the working class. More recently the argument has been put forward that housewives do, in fact, indirectly participate in the creation and realization of surplus-value in that they are essential to the reproduction of the productive forces of the society, that is, new workers, and to the reproduction of the relations of production through the socialization process. For this she is paid indirectly, through her husband or directly through, say, welfare less than the value of what she is producing (which is a very long-term value). From this it would follow that all housewives, even the wives of the employers, are working class in a sense. At this point, however, it is sufficient only to suggest that women office workers, housewives or not, constitute a sex-linked stratum, or quasi-caste, within the working class.

Historical Development

Aside from a handful of studies in the 1930s, there has been very little systematic work on women in the clerical and sales strata until recently. Almost all of the literature available on this topic consisted of autobiographical accounts, exposés of specific job settings, short essays in feminist literature, or fiction. C W Mills' methodology, in his classic work *White Collar*, continued to be the standard approach for a long time. Based largely on his personal observations, and those of novelists such as Sinclair Lewis, John dos Passos, Tarkington, Morley, and others, Mills reconstructed in the Weberian sense an ideal-typical folklore of the "white-collar girl": born of small town, lower middle-class parents, she takes a

business curriculum in high school and moves to the big city to seek her fortune, and love. Failing at both, she settles into semi-adjustment in an office half-way between the midget office of the old style, and the modern, super-rationalized bureau. Often substituting this kind of "career" to marriage, she becomes the corporate equivalent of a nun, serving her boss tirelessly until retirement. The degree to which this "typical" picture was indeed true, is virtually unresearched.

Only recently has an attempt to develop a social-historical analysis of the office and its labour force begun. Benet (1972); Davies (1974), and Braverman (1974) have each analyzed the technological shifts which, as Braverman puts it, created the system of production which we today know as the modern office with its predominantly female labour force.

In 1870 there were but 82,000 (six-tenths of one per cent of the labour force) clericals; by 1880, there were 504,454 (three per cent of the labour force), and by 1890 there were 750,150.

In the last decades of the 1800s, the demand for office workers began to outstrip the supply.⁹ It was then that the field opened up to women. Davies says, "As business operations became more complex, there was a large increase in correspondence, record-keeping, and office work in general. This... created a demand for an expanded clerical force."¹⁰ But was this complexity merely a function of size, or did the nature of the labour process help to dictate the division of labour that introduced large numbers of women at its lower levels? Braverman argues forcefully that office work changed "from something merely incidental to management into a labour process in its own right, (hence) the need to systematize and control it began to be felt... management began to... substitute the impersonal discipline of a so-called modern organization" for the intimate relations of the small office, and office managership "developed as a special branch of management, with its own schools, professional associations, textbooks and manuals"¹¹. Thus it was not merely size or complexity, but the imperatives of profit-seeking management that led to increasing division of labour, and to the development of a stratified office force.

Patriarchal Pattern

In 1873, the typewriter was invented. The office rapidly became stratified into lower-paid clerical and secretarial functions, increasingly held by women, and the better-paid accountant and semi-managerial jobs held by men, many of whom had been clerks earlier. Compulsory public education at the same time created a large pool of literate women ready to enter the expanding office work force. As new categories of jobs were created, for example, by the invention of the telephone, it was women who were recruited to operate them: by 1902, the Bell System had 37,000 women operators, and only 2,500 men.

In a variety of clerical occupations, the proportion of women has steadily increased since the 1870s: thus, while women made up only two per cent of book keepers,¹² accountants and cashiers in 1870, by 1940

they were 51 per cent. In 1947, women were 59.7 per cent of all clerical workers; by 1957, this had increased to 67.5 per cent and by 1969, 74.5 per cent¹³.

The image of the woman office worker, about the turn of the century, was that she was the daughter of the middle class, working for "pin money." Whatever the truth of this may have been, whatever the proportion of middle-class, literate women entering the office labour force, it was accompanied by large numbers of daughters of farmers and blue-collar workers, of whom even less is known in any accurate way. By the turn of the century, the cities began to be inundated with rural women who came to work, many in factories, but also many others in offices. According to Benet, the hostels operated by the YWCA, the WCTU, and other welfare organizations, were one side effect. The First World War and, in a different way, the depression of the 1930s, further increased the demand for secretarial and other office workers as government employment increased, and with it the flood of paper work associated with the modern bureaucracy.

Thus, as the industrial revolution sent women from peasant, farm- and domestic servitude into the modern factory, the factory in turn created the technology which was to send still other rural, middle-class, and blue-collar women into the lower strata of office life. The stratification system of the factory and the office, Davies and Benet argue, reflected the patriarchal relations of family life: typically, "five or six typists, stenographers or file clerks would be directly accountable to one supervisor. And if that supervisor was a man (as was generally the case in the early twentieth century) and those clerical workers were women, it is easy to see how patriarchal patterns of male-female relations would reinforce the office hierarchy."¹⁴ At the upper level of secretarial life, that of the "personal secretary," the upper-class male was able to recreate a rapidly dying Victorian system in which man was allegedly if not in actuality the master at home. In addition to his wife, the male now had a secretary to minister to his logistical needs and, possibly, to assume the role of real power broker at the micro-level, the office.

Economic Structure

In terms of economic structure, the growth of the services sector, including the public sector generally, with its apparently insatiable demand for lower-level office skills, by now sex-stereotyped, explains the large number of women office workers—together, of course with their availability through public education. Since the 1940s, some 60 per cent of the employees in the services sector have been women, though of course not all are office workers. If one incorporates professional and technical workers as well, it is not hard to see how 60 per cent of employees in education are women; in the medical and health industry the figure is 75 per cent; in personal services, 75 per cent. "Many jobs in the service industry can be described," Waldman and McEaddy point out, "as extensions

of what women do as homemakers—teach children and young adults, nurse the sick, prepare food.”¹⁵ And, one might add, jobs that are re-interpretations of traditional homemaking, logistical support functions such as cleaning up, preparing tools, and laying out clothes are functions performed by many secretaries in one form or another for their bosses.

The historical roots of sex-stereotyping in jobs are today bolstered by the economic pressures on the services sector, especially the public sector, to keep wages in these relatively labour-intensive fields down to total costs. Discriminatory practices to keep the labour costs for women cheaper than for men, even in similar or identical jobs, is therefore “functional” to the economic health of a particular firm or agency.

Office Explosion

One argument made to account for income differences between men and women is that women have higher turnover rates, that is, engage in more job-hopping than men or leave the labour force, say, to have children. This position has been extended to help explain why women might be less likely to join unions, hence limiting their ability to protest at poor working conditions, low wages, or the ravages of work force erosion by automation¹⁶. These arguments as well as the charge that women have higher rates of absenteeism, have now been seriously challenged, and shown to be inadequate if not outright wrong¹⁷. Women do appear to quit the labour force altogether at somewhat higher rates than men, but quit to improve their jobs somewhat less than men. Moreover, these “quit” rates are cyclical in nature, being closely correlated to the unemployment rate. For instance in 1955, women clerical quit rates were identical to those of men; in 1961 it was perhaps 20 per cent higher; so was the unemployment rate. In periods of higher unemployment, fewer people leave their jobs voluntarily; hence women’s ratios go up.¹⁸ The observation that “the occupational careers of women are not continuous as their labour force participation is geared to the family life cycle”¹⁹ still continues to be true. Hence, in jobs where seniority leads to higher pay, as in government, interrupted careers lead to lower wages relative to men.

The position that women are less likely to join unions than men must be carefully modified, as well. Data on a series of 1969 white-collar elections indicate that women did not differ significantly from men in their votes for union representation.²⁰ It is true that within an industry, men are more likely to be union members than women, and that both men and women are more likely to be unionized if an industry is predominantly male.²¹ However, this is somewhat like saying that whites are more likely to be unionized than blacks in the construction trades, when most blacks are not in construction. The type of industry in which women are most frequently employed is one in which there has been relatively less union activity, in part because it is a newer, white collar or service industry including state and local government. It is in these sectors that

the explosion of women's employment has taken place within the past two or three decades.²²

Much of the traditional focus on women in the labour force, as Davies points out, has been on industrial workers or on professionals rather than on the lower echelons of white-collar work. Yet, only 12.5 per cent of white women and 15 per cent of black women, were in the 'operatives' category in 1972, and just under 15 per cent of women workers were in the professional and technical stratum. In contrast, as has been mentioned, about one woman in three is in the clerical stratum. In 1960, 17.3 per cent of the labour force including men were in the operatives' category, and by 1980 this is expected to decrease to 15.6 per cent. On the other hand, in 1960 14.5 per cent of the employed labour force was clerical; by 1980 this may rise to 18.7 per cent. In April 1975, only 10.8 per cent of women were operatives, in contrast to 35.5 per cent clerical.

In certain categories of clerical and sales work, women constitute the overwhelming majority of workers: in 1960, 1.5 million women constituted 97 per cent of all secretaries; 750,000 women were 84 per cent of all book keepers; nearly 500,000 women typists were 95 per cent of all typists; 342,000 women telephone operators were 96 per cent of all operators; over 250,000 women stenographers were 96 per cent of all stenos; 112,000 women file clerks were 86 per cent of the total; and 228,000 women office machine operators made up 74 per cent of all those in this job.

The percentage of black and other minority race women in the lower white-collar strata is considerably less than white women. By 1971, for example, when 35.5 per cent of all white women in the labour force were employed in the clerical stratum, the figure for minority women was only 22 per cent. They are correspondingly over-represented in the service category, and slightly over-represented among women operatives.

Civil Service

In the public sector, where a large percentage of the labour force is white collar, the phenomenon of women office workers is even more significant than in the private sector. In 1970, there were about 2.5 million federal employees. Of that number, close to two million were white collar. Of that number in turn, about 33 per cent were women. But over half of all white collar employment in the federal government is in grades 1 through 6—that is, clerks, secretaries, stenographers, typists, and the like. In grade I they constituted, in 1970, 68.5 per cent of all employees; in grade II, 75.8 per cent; in grade IV, 63.3 per cent, in grade V, 32.1 per cent and in grade VI, 47.7 per cent.

The position of women in clerical work is thus a long-established historical phenomenon. "Their rate of growth," says McNally, "far exceeded that of men as bank tellers, bill collectors, insurance adjusters, examiners and investigators, payroll and time clerks, postal clerks, stock clerks and store keepers".²³ The total women in the clerical force increased by 51

TABLE I
GRADES AND SALARY RANGES OF WOMEN,
OCTOBER 1970

Grade	Percentage of Women	Annual Salary Range (in dollars)
I	68.5	4125-5358
II	75.8	4621-6007
III	78.1	5212-6778
IV	63.3	5853-7608
V	32.1	6548-8510
VI	47.7	7294-9481
VII	37.9	8098-10,528
VIII	25.6	8956-11,647
IX	24.0	9881-12,842
X	12.0	10,869-14,127
XI	12.4	12,615-15,478
XII	7.2	14,192-18,449

SOURCE: U S Civil Service Commission, *Study of Employment of Women in the Federal Government*, 1970, pp 17 and 235.

per cent between 1958 and 1968, as compared to an 18 per cent increase for men.²⁴ Much of this increase is due to the creation of a myriad of new white collar jobs connected to computers and other automated machinery as programmers, systems analysts, console operators, and tape librarians. While fewer women than men are initially selected for these jobs, a larger office force is required to support these advanced technicians.

Wages and Working Conditions

However, this advance in technology which requires a larger office force in some areas at the same time threatens the existence of other lower-level office jobs.

Computers are now doing much book keeping, payroll, sales, invoicing, and inventory work, especially in the insurance, telephone, department store, and banking industries... Key-punch operators also are being eliminated in companies which install optical scanners ... From a peak of about 262,300 in 1952, the number of telephone operators employed by major telephone carriers gradually dropped to around 167,200 in 1962 and then climbed back to 193,200 by 1967... Yet during this period there was a tremendous expansion in telephone service.²⁵

Are the salaries given in table I consistent with the general picture for women office workers? In the services sector, January 1973 earnings averaged \$111 per week; in hospitals, \$108; in general merchandising, \$82. This of course covers all workers, not only women, and all jobs, not only clerical. Nevertheless, if women typically earn less than men it is not

hard to see that such incomes are far below the US median; for example the average hourly wage for production workers in 1972 was \$4.05, which works out to \$150.66 for the average work week of 37.2 hours. \$111 per week is equivalent to a grade III clerk in table I, the grade with the highest percentage of women. Here are some contrasting figures for occupations with high proportions of women in private industry. It may be noted that the higher category of the occupation normally involves more application of experience and judgment; possibly some training duties and, in the case of secretaries, span of control of the supervising executive—a combination of the executive's rank and the number of employees supervised.

TABLE II
MEAN ANNUAL SALARIES IN SELECTED CLERICAL OCCUPATIONS,
MARCH 1973

	Salary (in dollars)
File Clerk I	4852
II	5349
III	6593
Key-punch Operator I	6042
II	6922
Secretary I	7347
II	8221
III	8842
IV	9583
Stenographer, General	6521
Senior	7425
Typist I	5434
II	6339

SOURCE: U S Department of Labour, Bureau of Labour Statistics, Bulletin No 1804, 1973, *National Survey of Professional, Administrative, Technical, and Clerical Pay*.

Apart from the generally low wage picture of women office workers in the US conditions, the threat of unemployment stemming from changes in technology, as yet an indeterminate factor, and the threat of cut-backs in the work week and layoffs related to the general state of the current economy²⁶, a relatively new phenomenon is just beginning to take shape: women also suffer from a range of occupational health problems, cited by a variety of authorities.

More general than any of these immediate problems, however, is the basic structure of the work itself. Mills, in *White Collar*, wrote about the mechanization of the office and the salesroom. But modern machinery has outdated his description. Today word-processing equipment which links tape recorders to typewriters, telephones to typewriters, or utilizes

the typewriter as a computer terminal-text editing machine, is rapidly displacing many earlier forms of manually operated machines, at least proportionally if not in absolute numbers of installations. Electric typewriters using the "golf ball" are absolutely displacing manual typewriters.²⁷ The traditional typist or secretary is similarly being displaced by a much more subdivided work system in which she becomes a word processor in a bank of typists who never come into contact with either the source or the recipient of the message.

This, however, is only the first tiny step in a much more fundamental technological revolution: the paperless office, in which all record handling will be electronic, utilizing TV-size display terminals with keyboards. Controlling office costs, of which workers' salaries are an important component will lead many firms to invest in capital-intensive technology, at which point the clerical labour force may begin actually to decline. The first steps, including the word-processing centre, the editing typewriter, and the use of the TV terminal to retrieve information, are well under way. The effects on employment are virtually unknown, and rarely discussed.²⁸

What does seem apparent, according to a Women's Bureau study in 1970, is that "entry jobs, which are typically low skilled and routine, have been a prime target for elimination by automation in some fields...In such industries as insurance and banking, the relative loss of low-skilled jobs has been especially hard on young women...and may have some influence on the persistently high unemployment rate of teenagers."²⁹

Class Consciousness

The classical Marxian tradition would hold that the foregoing conditions should lead initially to dissatisfaction with work, and, in consequence, to trade unionization as first step in the direction of further radicalization. Trade unionization is seen as one index to job dissatisfaction.

While it is true that there has been increasing unionization among clerical and sales workers, the relationship of this trend to increasing job dissatisfaction is plain conjecture. A study, one of the first since the Second World War, found women in a white collar organization more satisfied with their jobs than men³⁰. But this was in only one firm involving 742 employees. Since that time there have been hundreds of "job satisfaction" studies, 15 with national coverage since 1958. Summarizing these studies, the Manpower Administration found that clerical workers ranked relatively low in satisfaction but not as low as operatives and non-farm labourers.³¹ On the whole, sex differences in any particular job are slight, with white-collar workers generally rating "interesting work" as somewhat more important than income, as compared with blue-collar workers.

The question of consciousness or attitudes is a highly complex one, far too much so to receive ample treatment here. However, three things can be said in summary. First, as many observers of the political socialization

literature have pointed out, what surveys reveal today is not necessarily how people behave tomorrow. External factors, particularly the present economic crunch which is hitting white-collar workers for the first time since the 1930s (and in the case of many clerical wives, hitting their husbands who are blue collar operatives particularly hard) may alter presumed middle-class or conservative attitudes; Secondly white-collar workers are not alone in their "middle class" aspirations, such as to consumerism. These appear to be shared by many strata of the labour force, including blue-collar workers. On the other hand, as Hamilton points out, the "line" dividing the strata on many political issues appears to put white-collar workers, especially clericals, lower non-manuals, as he terms them, more into alignment with blue-collar workers than with the more conservative upper non-manuals.³³ Thirdly if trade unionization is taken as some kind of index, even though a minimal one, of at least the beginnings of working-class consciousness, as most Marxists would argue (though Ollman expresses some reservations³⁴) then recent trends suggest that women office workers, though they may lag behind blue-collar men, cannot simply be dismissed as petty-bourgeois.

Trade Union Participation

Present working conditions among women office workers, such as those described earlier, have coincided with an awareness on the part of at least some unions that they must organize office workers in order to survive. The result of this coincidence, throughout the white collar labour force, has been increasing unionization among clerical and sales workers. In 1952, women constituted 18.1 per cent of all union members (2.9 million); by 1972 this had risen only to 21.7 per cent (4.2 million). However, women made up 30 per cent of the total increase in union membership in the decade 1958 to 1968, which would suggest that women are entering unions at a rate which is beginning to approach their proportion in the labour force, that is 37.1 per cent in 1968.³⁴

Yet the number of women in the labour force grew faster than the rate of unionization. Thus, the ratio of women union members to employed women actually declined from 15 per cent to 12.6 per cent in the years between 1952 and 1972. This declining ratio is a phenomenon true for all white-collar workers, and for all workers regardless of collar colour.

As is the case for the entire union scene, organizational growth among women workers is closely associated with gains in the white collar labour force. Three-fourths of all women unionists belonged to only 21 unions in 1968, but about 25 per cent of all unions had no women enrolled. In 1952, 13 unions had 50,000 or more women as members; by 1962, 17 unions were in that category, and by 1972, 24 unions had that many. In 1952, the three public sector unions of teachers, federal government employees and state, county and municipal employees had a combined membership of 60,000 women; by 1972 they had 420,000. Six AFL-CIO

affiliated unions had majority female membership in 1972: clothing workers, communications (including telephone) workers, ladies garment workers, office employees, retail clerks and teachers. The National Education Association, with about 737,000 women members in 1972, also has a female majority.³⁵

TABLE III
WOMEN MEMBERSHIP IN UNIONS

Union	1952	1972
Ladies' Garment	292,5000	342,400
Retail Clerks	125,000	316,600
Electrical (IBEW)	150,000	287,000
Clothing Workers	261,800	273,800
Teamsters	n.a.	255,000 (1970)
Communications Workers	n.a.	230,500
State, County and Municipal	n.a.	195,700
Auto Workers	118,400	195,100
Steelworkers	80,000	175,000
Service Employees	55,500	145,200
Teachers	37,500	129,200
Electrical Workers (IUE)	n.a.	116,000

SOURCE: Virginia Bergquist, "Women's Participation in Labour Organizations", *Monthly Labour Review*, October 1974.

Yet only four of the twelve unions listed above have significant numbers of clerical workers. However, three other unions, with a third of one per cent to 40 per cent female membership, are all heavily clerical: The American Federation of Government Employees, with perhaps a third of its total of 293,000 members; the 200,000-member Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, with some 80,000 women members; and the Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks, with about 95,000 women out of a total membership of 238,000. In addition, while it is true that only a third of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees is white collar, most of its women members are in the clerical stratum. Five unions represent 47 per cent of all unionized clerical workers: three in government, the Railway Clerks, and the Office and Professional Employees which has 50,000 women members out of a total of 83,000.

As union growth among women workers is associated with the expansion of the white collar labour force, it is for the same reason associated with the growth of government unions. During the 1958-68 decade, unionized government workers as a proportion of all unionized workers nearly doubled, from 5.8 per cent to 10.7 per cent. Women union members in government as a proportion of all women union members likewise increased, from 5.3 per cent in 1958 to 11.4 per cent in 1968. Yet this very same phenomenon accounts for the overall small proportion of women in unions, for "the types of occupations women have entered

most frequently in the last 10 years have been among the traditionally less organized."³⁶

In some sectors, however, unionization rates of women are similar to those of men. In 1970, in the transportation, communications, and public utilities groups of the services sector, exactly 30.1 per cent of both women and men were in unions.³⁷ In public administration, however, where 27.7 per cent of white collar men are unionized, only 10.7 per cent of women are in unions. Overall, probably less than 10 per cent of all office workers are organized. The manufacturing sector contributes 44.3 per cent of all union members as compared, in non-manufacturing, with 11.2 per cent for government, 7.5 per cent for wholesale and retail trade, and 6.2 per cent for services, including personal services, amusement, hospitals and education.³⁸

The bulk of women unionists are probably still in blue collar or gray collar unions such as Auto Workers with some 200,000 women members, the Machinists with over 100,000, the Meat Cutters numbering close to 100,000, the Clothing Workers, and the Ladies' Garment Workers.

Sources of Resistance

Why has the growth of women union membership in the white collar field (as well as more generally) been so slow that, in fact, there is a proportional decline? First, women are heavily concentrated in industries that are late in coming to the union scene, as has been mentioned. Secondly it must be remembered that "gains and losses are not uniform in size or direction."³⁹ In the West, losses in proportions of unionized workers were highest between 1966 and 1970, higher among women than among men, and higher among blue-collar workers than among white. Generally, losses are higher among blue collar women than white collar women, and there appears to be a correlation (though which is cause and which is effect is not clear) between income gaps and union membership—the higher the proportion of the unionized labour force, the less the wage disparity and vice-versa.

It is generally assumed that union members earn more, hence women ought to be joining unions in order to share that advantage. It does seem to be true that male-female wage differentials in unionized establishments are less than in non-unionized establishments; in one study, the differential is reported as half as much as in non-union work places⁴⁰ but that is an overall average, and the differential among clerical workers as such is not reported.

Within any specific industry in the private sector, union production workers have a 10 to 15 per cent advantage over non-union workers. But this advantage does not "spill over" to non-production workers, who include women office workers, thereby creating no advantage for unionization.⁴¹ Even more significantly, while the overall advantage to all blue collar men of being in unions is approximately 15 per cent and the advantage for blue collar women is about 21 per cent, a series of studies

conducted in 1960, 1963 and 1966 indicate that unions have virtually no effect on white collar earnings, even in cities where white-collar workers are fairly well organized. In 1963 and 1966 the advantage to white collar men was in the neighbourhood of five per cent but for women it was even slightly negative!⁴² However, this was a decade ago, and even then the author cautions us that the real test is yet to come, as white collar unions' increase their power and get more militant.

But there are still other reasons for women's resistance to unionization, although this resistance does not appear to be greater than that of men, once an election is scheduled. First, "the 7.6 million women who were part-time employees (1972) probably felt less prompted to participate in the union movement due to their frequent entry into and exit from the labour market."⁴³ Second, despite unions' gradual acknowledgment of the special needs of women in contract demands, women continue to be discriminated against in union leadership roles, although this is less true of white collar unions especially government unions in which there are large proportions of women members.

In consequence, a number of unions have been holding conferences oriented to women's needs. In March 1974, the Coalition of Labour Union Women (CLUW) was set up at a conference in Chicago. About 3200 delegates from 58 unions attended. Since CLUW is not open to non-union women, a struggle ensued between CLUW leaders who are union officials (and who appear to desire CLUW to proceed within traditional channels of official trade union practices and demands) and some other women unionists who seek a more open membership, including housewives, and a less traditional approach to union goals.

Input of Feminism

At a more local level a series of women's groups, some affiliated with CLUW, some more independent and radical, have sprung into existence in the past few years: Women Employed, in Chicago; Women Act to Gain Equality, on the West Coast; Women Office Workers, in New York; and "9 to 5," which is the title of a newsletter, a group of women clerical workers in Boston. These groups are all feminist as well as unionist in orientation, and while their total membership is miniscule compared to their "target population", they do suggest what can happen when the feminist alumnae of the "new left" enter the office work force.

Apart from those feminists working in CLUW and similar organizations, and the legislative impact, especially of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, on the labour market, what has been the effect of the women's movement on the office work force? Raphael's summary seems a fair one: "Beyond this joining of forces over legislative issues, it is doubtful that the liberation movement will ever gain a large following among women blue-collar workers, whether or not they are union members."⁴⁴ There is a great deal of mutual distrust: middle-income women in the women's movement have different issues from lower-income women, for

whom many "liberation" issues seem trivial or irrelevant. Moreover, unions are sometimes the targets of women's rights suits, pitting women against both unions and employers. The result sometimes has been that the liberation movement has come to perceive unions *in toto* as foes, which does not help in reaching women union members.

The conjunction of feminism and women in the working class has been a difficult one to grasp, since in part it is dependent upon a definition of what women "are"; in turn the conceptualization of this conjunction helps to develop such a definition. Harris and Silverman point to two contradictions, or strains, in the position of women today^{4 5}: first, the fact that they are an increasing proportion of the labour force, that is, they have a significant role in the economic structure, confronts a traditional ideology which excludes them from that structure, and confines them (by means of socialization plus discrimination) to the family and home. Second, the family itself is under stress: the stability of the family is confronted by its rapidly changing economic function—the woman entering the labour force, partly resulting in, and partly as a consequence of, the family playing a smaller role in socializing children into future work roles. The result is that young and better-educated people generally and women in particular are a good deal confused about the meaning of work and family. The illusions of upward mobility that justified previous distribution of power and wealth are being shattered by the realities of work, life, and unemployment. Older women, particularly, are having their identities challenged by their daughters.

Changes at Work Place

What is the likely outcome of this crisis, of this conjunction, particularly at the white collar work place? One possible outcome is that work-place organizing, particularly trade unionization, will grow with or without the input of feminism. But trade unionization is not synonymous with "class consciousness," and even if it were, or to the degree that it is, this does not necessarily lead to radical consciousness. On the contrary, to the degree that unions are able, as they have in the past, to secure minimal gains they may be able to channel women workers into fairly narrow "bread-and-butter" interest group (as contrasted to class-wide) politics. Today, even the idea that trade unionism constitutes a "movement" is open to serious challenge.^{4 6}

A more complex outcome would be based on the assumption of deeper economic crisis, and deeper crises in the total culture, so that trade unionism by itself would not be adequate, in terms of "economism" or interest group politics, in arriving at even temporary solutions to the problems of women workers. In this context, feminism as well as other forms of radicalism would play a larger role at the work place than is presently the case.

Superimposed upon either situation is the possibility that there may be an upper limit to the employment of women, particularly in a job

shortage era, so that the number and proportion of women workers, office and otherwise, may not come to exceed the present proportion, though their profile may change with technological changes such as automation⁴⁷.

Nevertheless, that upper limit if there is one, is very high and there remains a vast reservoir of potential union members in the clerical and sales strata. Whether that reservoir can be tapped for membership and whether that membership will, with the overlay of the quasi-caste character of women workers, become more politically volatile, remains to be seen.

New Proletarians

The "new working class" theory advanced in recent years by Tournaine, Mallet, Mandel, and earlier by Mills, Lederer, Croner, and even the classical Marxist Lewis Corey, has been much maligned. It is clear to any serious student of this literature that virtually none amongst them is guilty of adopting the vulgar position so often laid on the doorstep of this school, namely that white-collar workers have displaced the traditional working class entirely, or even in overwhelming proportion, as the major lever for social change. Equally it should be clear that inasmuch as this sector of the labour force sells its labour power for wages and contributes to the generation or realization of surplus-value, it is not a new kind of petty-bourgeoisie in any large numbers. But this is not to deny that the upper layers of the white collar occupations do overlap in some cases and are a component part, in other cases, of the bourgeoisie.

When it comes to the mass of white-collar workers who are to be found in the clerical and sales strata mainly occupied in the services sector, and particularly in the governmental sector, a number of ambiguous and contradictory situations encroach upon the position of the worker as worker. The most significant of them it seems to me, is that much of the work not merely appertains to the "realization of surplus-value" but is even more specifically repressive in nature (such as contributing to the maintenance of the status quo by means of performing quasi-police functions like social work and teaching which is perpetuation of the social relations of production) in much the same manner as the bourgeois family does but more rationally. This contradiction, between an educated worker doing work which is presumed to be useful, but which in fact is repressive of others, and in a context which in itself is repressive—the proletarianized office—has the potential, particularly when combined with trade union consciousness, feminism, economic crisis, and the as yet highly problematic rise of a serious socialist force in the US, of making the woman office worker a dynamic and essential element in any developing working-class socialist movement.

This article concentrates on materials pertinent to the United States of America and to the situation of women office workers there. While some of the discussion has a bearing also on other "Western" or technologically advanced societies, no attempt is made to deal with the situation in the developing or Third World nations.

- ¹ Charles H Anderson, *The Political Economy of Social Class*, Prentice Hall, 1974.
- ² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol 3.
- ³ Women's Bureau, U S Department of Labour, *Handbook on Women Workers*, Bulletin No 294, 1969.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, table 15.
- ⁵ Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate*, Random House, 1971. See also Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectics of Sex*, Morrow, 1970.
- ⁶ Joan Acker, "Women and Social Stratification: A Case of Intellectual Sexism" *American Journal of Sociology* 78, 4 January 1973, p 941.
- ⁷ Martin Oppenheimer, "The Sub-Proletariat: Dark Skin and Dirty Work", *The Insurgent Sociologist*, Winter 1974.
- ⁸ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, Monthly Review Press, 1971, 127 ff.
- ⁹ Mary Kathleen Benet, *The Secretarial Ghetto*, McGraw-Hill, 1973.
- ¹⁰ Margery Davies, "Women's Place is at the Typewriter: The Feminization of the Clerical Labour Force", *Radical America*, July-August 1974.
- ¹¹ Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, Monthly Review Press, 1974.
- ¹² Margery Davies, *op. cit.*, p 22.
- ¹³ Abbott L Ferris, *Indicators of Trends in the Status of American Women*, Russel Sage Foundation, 1971, p 377.
- ¹⁴ Margery Davies, *op. cit.*, p 21.
- ¹⁵ Elizabeth Waldman and Beverly J Mc Eaddy, "Where Women Work—An Analysis by Industry and Occupation", *Monthly Labour Review*, May 1974.
- ¹⁶ Ben B Seligman, "The Impact of Automation on White-Collar Workers" in Simon Marcson (ed), *Automation, Alienation and Anomie*, Harper and Row, 1970.
- ¹⁷ Women's Bureau, *Handbook on Women Workers*, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸ J Peter Mattila, "Labour Turnover and Sex Discrimination", Working paper 1974-01, Industrial Relations Centre, Iowa State University, 1974.
- ¹⁹ Valerie Kincaide Oppenheimer, "The Sex-labelling of Jobs", *Industrial Relations* 7, May 1968.
- ²⁰ Lucretia M Dewey, "Women in Labour Unions", *Monthly Labour Review*, February 1971.
- ²¹ Edna E Raphael, "Working Women and Their Membership in Labour Unions" *Monthly Labour Review*, May 1974.
- ²² Virginia A Bergquist, "Women's Participation in Labour Organizations", *Monthly Labour Review*, October 1974.
- ²³ Gertrude Bancroft McNally, "Patterns of Female Labour Force Activity", *Industrial Relations* 7, No 3, May 1968.
- ²⁴ Women's Bureau, U S Department of Labour, *Automation and Women Workers*, February 1970.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 2-3.
- ²⁶ The unemployment rate for clerical workers in 1973 was 4.2 per cent; in 1974 it was 4.6 per cent and in May 1975, it was 7.8 per cent. This is still far below the May 1975 rate of 14.4 per cent for operatives and even further below the 1930s depression rates but it is a new experience. Official rates, it must be remembered, are considerably below "real" rates.
- ²⁷ *New York Times*, 4 May 1975.
- ²⁸ *Business Week*, 30 June 1975.
- ²⁹ Women's Bureau, *Automation and Women Workers*, *op. cit.*
- ³⁰ Nancy Morse, *Satisfaction in the White Collar Job*, University of Michigan, 1953.
- ³¹ Manpower Administration, U S Department of Labour, *Job Satisfaction: Is There a Trend?* Manpower Research Monograph, 1974.
- ³² Richard F Hamilton, *Class and Politics in the United States*, Wiley, 1972.
- ³³ Bertell Ollman, "Towards Class Consciousness Next Time: Marx and the Working Class", *Politics and Society*, Fall 1972.

- ⁸⁴ Lucretia M Dewey, *op. cit.*, See also Virginia A Bergquist, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁵ Virginia Bergquist, *ibid.*
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ Edna E Raphael, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Morley Gunderson, "Male-Female Wage Differentials and the Impact of Equal Pay Legislation", Working Paper 74-04, Faculty of Management Studies, University of Toronto, 1914.
- ⁴¹ R L Raimon and V Stoikov, "The Effects of Blue Collar Unionism on White Collar Earnings", *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*, April 1969, pp 358-374.
- ⁴² Daniel S Hamermesh, "White Collar Unions, Blue Collar Unions, and Wages in Manufacturing", *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*, January 1971, pp 159-170.
- ⁴³ Bergquist, *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁴ Raphael, *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁵ Alice K Harris and Betram Silverman, "Women in Advanced Capitalism", *Social Policy*, July-August 1973, pp 16-22.
- ⁴⁶ Stanley, Aronowitz, *False Promises*, Mc Graw-Hill, 1973, Ch 4.
- ⁴⁷ Judith Blake, "The Changing Status of Women in Developed Countries", *Scientific American*, September 1974.

MYTHILY SHIVARAMAN

Towards Emancipation

THIS ARTICLE deals with three related questions concerning the status of women. Is the woman (majority of world's women) a free agent or an enslaved being? Does she have an identity of her own or is she a mere appendage of the male—a commodity he possesses, whose sole rationale for existence is to make his own living more comfortable—with no relevance outside of his life? Secondly, if the latter is true, was this so from the beginning of human history? Was woman ordained by nature to be the "second sex"? If she was once free and man's equal how did her "fall" come about? In other words, what happened to the female in history? Thirdly how can she liberate herself and become once again a human being and not a just a "woman"?

It would suffice to answer the first question briefly as there seems to be a worldwide consensus, at least at the official and formal level, that women constitute the most deprived majority community. Hardly much serious research or work has gone into the question of women's uplift even in the richer countries, reflecting an indifference to the problem. Yet, even the most hidebound male chauvinist must admit, if he would care to look at the abundant data put out by the United Nations on the condition of women in most parts of the world, that the female lags behind the man, to varying extent in different countries, in everything that lends dignity

to human life. This is not a recent development but the historic legacy of the woman. August Bebel has depicted in meticulous detail the supercilious treatment meted out to women from the beginning of the Christian era down the middle ages to modern capitalism.¹ He called the woman "the first human being to come into bondage. She was a slave before the male slave existed."²

The woman is unfree in the sense that what she is today is what she was made out to be by the man over thousands of years of history. The only identity she has of herself is that given by the man to suit the needs of his ever-inflating ego. The values that she has internalized and upholds most vigorously—uncritical obedience to the man, faith in his superiority, chastity, devotion to the family to the exclusion of every other interest—are those created by the man to buttress his familial and social dominance. Her supreme virtue lies in being a total nonentity, in completely denying herself a life of her own and in totally identifying herself with the hopes, frustrations, likes and dislikes of her family.

Impact of Images

A woman is wife to a man and a household, and mother. A man is rarely ever defined as a husband or a father. He is always perceived as an engineer, a doctor, an artist, a machinist and so on. He is defined in terms of the role he plays in the productive process or the service he renders to the community. Not so the woman. As Simone de Beauvoir says, "Man is defined as a human being and woman is defined as a female. Whenever she tries to behave as a human being she is accused of trying to emulate the male".³

The man-made "feminine culture", applicable mostly to the upper classes and to a lesser degree to the lower classes made out the ideal woman to be a frail creature solely of decorative worth. Much was made of her feebleness and dependence. The woman was the eternal "damsel in distress" and the man became the knight errant, her benefactor. Many a dictator, it should be recalled, began his career as a benevolent protector of his people.

A reflection of woman's dependence is the fact that her contribution to humanity's advance (scientific discoveries for instance) has been negligible. While her physical labour has built many an empire, she has rarely had a share in real political power. All this implies that for some reason or the other, the woman has not had the opportunity to develop her creative potential. She has not asserted herself as a human being who is engaged in the perennial struggle with nature to comprehend and change and in the process undergo changes herself. The effect has been disastrous for the development of the woman's personality which has been traditionally identified with timidity, caution, irrationality and emotionalism.

This is true not only for the women of the Third World but for those in the "West", the industrially advanced capitalist world, as well.

In the west two main images of women are projected in the mass media. One is of the "silly and scatterbrained" housewife for ever looking for sales and cut-price bargains and mindlessly acquiring things that she could well do without. The other is of the woman as sex object—the glamorous nude selling an after-shave lotion or displaying an automobile with little on, apart from a vacuous smile. Says Juliet Mitchell: "Women do literally sell their bodies—if not as prostitutes, then to the publicity industries, modelling and so on—much as men and women sell their labour power. As a worker finds himself alienated in his own product, so (roughly speaking) a woman finds herself alienated in her own commercialized body."⁴ The woman is never shown as a person having anything to do with producing the products she helps to sell. The woman is the consumer and the man is the producer. The American housewife who under the spell of the "feminine mystique"⁵ thought herself to be the happiest person, was in for a rude shock when the mystique, shorn of its romantic aura, showed itself up in the glare of the liberation movements of the late sixties, as the man's ruse to keep her out of his way and under his thumb. Her realization that despite having the world's best kitchen gadgets and plumbing system she is a big nothing is expressed so aptly by Meredith Tax:

When I am by myself, I am nothing. I only know that I exist because I am needed by someone who is real, my husband, and by my children. My husband goes out into the real world...I stay in the imaginary world in this house, doing jobs that I largely invent and that no one cares about but myself...I seem to be involved in some sort of mysterious process.⁶

If such is the fate of the average American woman what of her Indian sister? Crushed by unrelieved poverty, obscurantism, tyrannical social taboos and brutal male authority, she remains even today literally a beast of burden.

FALL OF WOMAN

How did women come to be the "wretched of the earth"? The limited purpose here is only to sum up some major and significant attempts that have been made to situate the woman question in a historical perspective and to see to what extent they help us understand how her "fall" occurred. The work that merits mention first in this respect is the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, a unique contribution by Engels to an understanding of the history of the female.⁷ The main thrust of Engels's work is to oppose the widely prevalent notion of woman's natural inferiority based either on the simplistic claim that she was made so by the Creator or the more sophisticated attempt to attribute human attitudes and customs to instincts inherited from the apes and not to cultural factors.

Engels was the first to advance a historical explanation of the dialectical relationship between the developments in the means of procuring

food, the rise of private property in them, the evolution of monogamy and the subjugation of woman. Based mainly on the research carried out by Morgan on the American Indian communities, Engels traced the development of the means of production and the consequent evolution of the family through the epochs of savagery, barbarism and civilization. In the infancy of humanity—savagery—man lived mostly in trees subsisting initially on nuts, roots and fruits and later, on fish and wild game. In this he was aided by the club and spear and the bow and arrow. This period when *gentes* or tribes procured and ate in common was characterized by group marriage: "whole groups of men and whole groups of women belonged to one another". Sexual intercourse between parents and children, brothers and sisters was normal. Jealousy, incest and possessiveness were unknown. In marked contrast to the civilized society of today, where it is in effect polygamy for the man and monogamy for the woman, there was then no discrimination in sexual freedom and no double standards favouring the man. Private property in the means used to procure food was unknown. Neither the woman nor the implements belonged to any man. "Division of labour was a pure and simple outgrowth of nature; it existed only between the two sexes."⁸ The woman did household work and looked after children but still enjoyed high status.

Leading Role in Primitive Agriculture

The discovery of pottery marks the second epoch of barbarism. Domestication and breeding of cattle and cultivation of plants began. The weaving loom and several metal implements began to be used. By the end of this period smelting of iron ore was in vogue, leading to the use of iron ploughshare drawn by cattle. Meat and milk became plentiful. Land came to be cultivated on a wide scale. Forests were cleared and population increased rapidly. For the first time, surplus—production of more than what is necessary for maintaining the producers—became possible. Labour power assumed a new dimension when it began to yield noticeable surplus. New social relationships emerged. Women acquired exchange value and "wives came to be bought". The developments in the techniques of production set off a chain reaction of surplus, division of labour and social classes. As for man-woman relationship, the pair marriage (one man living with one woman in an easily dissoluble tie, with the children still belonging to the mother) came to replace the earlier group marriage, which faded away with the increasing prohibitions on marriage between generations and among brothers and sisters. In the pair marriage, polygamy and occasional infidelity already became man's privilege, says Engels, although they were rarely used for economic reasons. Still the matriarchal family continued and paternity was yet to appear. The increased productivity of labour drastically altered the man-woman equation in the household. Until then the general pattern was somewhat like this:

The men went to war, hunted, fished, provided the raw material for food and the tools necessary for these pursuits. The women cared

for the house, and prepared food and clothing; they cooked, weaved and sewed. Each was master in his or her own field of activity; the men in the forest, the women in the house. Each owned the tools he or she made and used.⁹

When primitive agriculture (cultivating garden plots nearer home) in which the woman played the leading role and which was hitherto the predominant form of production, gave place to intensive cultivation of vast areas and to cattle breeding, the key position in production passed on to the man.

Rise of Private Property

By the later half of barbarism the herds and flocks had become converted from communal to private property of individual heads of families. How did property, which was owned in common, become private? How and when this occurred, "we do not know to this day", says Engels. The new wealth of humanity created a "revolution" in the family. Since the function of procuring food fell to the man, he tended the cattle and came in due course to own them along with the slaves and commodities secured in exchange for them. It followed logically that the surplus produced by the instruments owned by the man could be consumed by the woman but she could lay no claim to it. This made a radical change in her position which had hitherto been supreme in the house. To her belonged only the household goods and not the cattle or slaves (who had assumed the function of money) downgrading the woman's position considerably. Engels elaborates:

Division of labour in the family had regulated the distribution of property between man and wife. The division remained unchanged and yet it now put the former domestic relationship topsy-turvy simply because the division of labour outside the family had changed. The very cause that had formerly made the woman supreme in the house ... her being confined to domestic work, now assured supremacy in the house for the man: the woman's housework lost its significance compared with the man's work in obtaining a livelihood.¹⁰

Still, the last and decisive *coup de grace* in completing the enslavement of the woman was yet to be delivered. It was to come with the transition of land, cattle and implements into complete private ownership and of pairing marriage to monogamy, and the larger social group into the family built around a single couple as the economic unit of society. Even when the man had become the owner of new wealth his property could not be inherited by his own children for there was still no certainty regarding paternity; it remained largely a matter of speculation. The family still remained matriarchal, descent reckoned through the mother and property inherited by the gentile relatives.

Hence the mother right had to be overthrown. It was not so difficult to achieve this revolution, "the most decisive in human history", says Engels. It was simply decided that the descendants of the male

members should remain in the gens, but those of the female were to be excluded and transferred to that of their father. Bebel mentions that this revolution need not have been so simple and quotes Bachofen who had found some evidence to show that women offered stiff resistance to this social transformation in the legends of the Amazonian kingdoms which have appeared in manifold variations in the folklore of several countries.¹¹ Engels wrote: "The overthrow of the mother right was the world historic defeat of the female sex. The man seized the reins in the house also, the woman was degraded, enthralled, the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children."¹²

Subjugation in Monogamy

To make father right meaningful, paternity had to be assured and thus monogamy came into existence. Engels saw in monogamy not the "reconciliation of man and woman... but the subjugation of one sex by the other as the proclamation of a conflict between the sexes entirely unknown hitherto in prehistoric times."¹³ Prostitution and infidelity (of the woman) were the inevitable byproducts of monogamy. The former, Engels wrote, was considered "honourable, or at most, as a slight moral stain that one bears with pleasure and the latter was treated as a crime entailing dire legal and social consequences."¹⁴ Thus emerged the patriarchal family, which Marx noted, "contained in embryo not only slavery but serfdom also, since from the very beginning it is connected with agricultural services. It contains within itself in miniature all the antagonisms which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state."¹⁵

Criticizing the widely prevalent notions of the natural, universal and inherent inferiority of women Engels wrote:

That woman was the slave of man at the commencement of society is one of the most absurd notions that have come down to us from the period of Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Woman occupied not only a free but also a highly respected position among all savages and all barbarians of the lower and middle stages and partly even of the upper stage... The communistic household, in which most of the women... belong to one and the same gens, while the men come from various other gentes, is the material foundation of that predominance of women which generally obtained in primitive times¹⁶.

There seems to be a tendency, simplistic and misleading, to glorify the period of savagery as the golden age of women and draw on Engels to substantiate it. This, however, is far from Engels's understanding. In talking of the "predominance of women" he could not have meant that women once held power over men in the same way that men later held power over women.¹⁷ That would be unrealistic, given the then prevalent economic structure. What Engels did mean seems to be that the early non-class societies did not involve the economic and social dependence of women on men. Even when there was sex-based division of labour in the primitive communist society with the woman tending the children and

running the house, she was not really oppressed; on the contrary she enjoyed high social status.

Popular myth rooted in religion has it that marriage, particularly monogamy, associated with romantic love is divinely ordained or at least is a permanent institution. What Engels has to say on the origin of monogamy and its essence will shock many an innocent:

The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male. Monogamy was a great historical step forward; Nevertheless,...it opens the period...in which prosperity and development for some is won through the misery and frustration of others.¹⁸

Monogamy did represent an advance compared to the earlier forms of marriage. Still, it was an oppressive institution in which the woman was confined to home divested of any role outside. The strictest moral code binding the woman even today, chastity, arose out of man's urge to retain property within the family.

Describing the historical evolution of the family as a continual process that excluded relatives until it contained the present form of a molecular family¹⁹ (husband, wife and children) Engels shows that with the growth of private property, the family had become the basic economic unit of society. But the woman's function within it changed more and more from communal to private service which downgraded her social status considerably. The Industrial Revolution destroyed what little dignity or grace had marked the woman's life in the family till then. The long working hours of women and children and the longer hours of men and the use of women as cheap labour or as a reserve army of the unemployed, essential for capitalism, had a disastrous and disintegrating impact on the family, especially the working-class family.

Engels's Contribution

To Engels goes the credit of making historical materialism lay bare not only the evolution of the state as an organ of class oppression but also the family as an organ of sexual oppression in which the man was the bourgeois and the woman the proletariat, and underlining the link between the two. Although—and Engels himself admitted this—the limited anthropological data available to him somewhat hampered his attempt to perceive the woman's social status not as something given and state but as a phenomenon evolving in response to economic compulsions, his contribution towards an understanding of the auxiliary role of the woman is truly great. Even those who contend like Karen Sacs that Engels has committed several ethnographic errors (as shown by recent data repudiating certain findings of Morgan) regard him as the only one providing a materialist theory, one that sees woman's place as varying from society to society, and epoch to epoch according to the prevailing economic and political relations of the society.²⁰ Kathleen Gough who finds

evidence in primitive societies to conclude, unlike Engels, that "from the start women have been subordinate to men in certain key areas of status, mobility, and public leadership" still agrees with the fundamental aspect highlighted by Engels that with the rise of private property the woman's status underwent a qualitative decline.²¹ Even hard core feminists who do not agree with the other aspects of Engels's treatise acknowledge and hail his use of historical data to prove that the woman's social position has not always and everywhere been subordinate to that of man, thus dealing a severe blow to the male chauvinistic notion of the woman as an ignoramus, a petty and puny creature by nature and fit only for domestic chores and child-bearing.

The Second Sex

Another work, considered an important contribution to the subject of women's liberation, is *The Second Sex* written more than half a century after Engels's major treatise, by the existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir.²² Drawing from historical materialism, psychoanalysis and existentialism, Beauvoir seeks to build a theory of the woman's oppression. The first question that she poses is, "Is there anything in the physiology of the woman which has made her the "second sex"? Comparing the relative data on muscular strength, specific gravity of blood and respiratory capacity of the two sexes, she concludes that "instability is strikingly characteristic of woman's organization in general which renders her more prone to an agitated and nervous behaviour. The biological specificity of the woman, she believes, has played a part "of the first rank and constituted an essential element in her situation."²³ The feminists, of course, do take serious objection to this posing of an inherent factor like physiology and not an external, social or man-imposed factor as the important reason for the woman's "fall". Countering the oft-repeated argument that certain hormonal characteristics disqualify women for several highly responsible and risk-taking positions, the feminists rightly argue that female hormones would have to be different in the Soviet Union where a third of the engineers and 75 per cent of the physicians are women. Still, in fairness to Beauvoir, it must be stressed that she did not make physiology the sole determinant. Hers was an attempt to view the facts of biology "in the light of an ontological, economic, social and psychological context."²⁴ The woman's status was determined by an interplay of these factors throughout history.

To understand the ontological context some familiarity with the existential concepts which she frequently uses becomes necessary. A human being according to her is a "subject" who, within an objectively given situation is willing, acting and choosing the self that he always is in the process of becoming. "Transcendence", a term frequently attributed by her to man as opposed to the woman, means reaching beyond oneself and getting involved in consciously chosen "projects". "Transcendence" is part of what defines people as distinct from animals. "Immanence", which

according to Beauvoir, is characteristic of woman, means the negation of transcendence, such as confinement or restriction to a narrow round of uncreative and repetitious duties. But how did it come about that the woman was denied the opportunity to "transcend"? According to her it is the biology factor that restricted or determined the role that the woman could play in procuring sustenance. Conceding that there are proofs of woman's role in wars like the Amazons of Dahomey who fought in wars with "no less ferocity and cruelty than man", she stresses:

but even so, man's strength must have been of tremendous importance in the age of the club and the wild beast. In any case, however strong were the women, the bondage of reproduction was a terrible handicap in the struggle against a hostile world. Pregnancy, child-birth and menstruation reduced their capacity for work and made them at times wholly dependent upon the men for protection and food.²⁵

Cumulative Process

Without discounting the force in this argument one must not fail to consider the possibility that the physiology of the human beings as we know it today has developed over several epochs in response to their socially conditioned physical activities. Exclusion from vigorous physical activities and confinement to certain types of functions alone over thousands of years could have resulted in making the woman less fit for some activities which were later considered to be her natural weaknesses. The point sought to be made here is that whatever might have been the initial biological disadvantages or inadequacies of the woman in relation to the man and to the food-gathering activities of the early times, these weaknesses, it seems logical to assume, have been greatly accentuated through specific social practices. The cumulative process seems to have been both physiological and psychological. For instance there is reason to doubt that child-birth or menstruation was in the early days as painful or debilitating as they are today, as the pain in these cases is considered more psychological than biological. This can be seen in the higher incidence of pain and discomfort associated with pregnancies and child-birth among the upper-class women doing less manual work. Psychologically-induced pain or fear presupposes a certain advance in civilization and hence a later point in history.

However, Beauvoir's stress on the biology factor helps to answer some questions that arise in the course of Engels's treatment of the subject. Statements by Engels like "gaining a livelihood had always been the business of man; he produced and owned the means therefor" raises the question "Why was it the man and not the woman whose business it always was to earn a livelihood"? Why was it that the "original domestication and subsequent tending" of cattle was the work of man and not of women? And what accounts for the fact that in primitive agriculture it was the woman who tended the fields nearer home and that it was the man who roamed the forests in quest of game? Why was the woman keeping house

and not the man? Beauvoir says, "The domestic labour fell to her lot because they were reconcilable with the cares of maternity."²⁶ The biological peculiarities, stressed by Beauvoir and nowhere so explicitly stated by Engels, seems to provide an answer to these questions. Maternity as an element contributing to the woman's social position is also stressed by Gough who sees "the unalterable fact of long child care combined with the exigencies of primitive technology" as the basis on which the inequality of the pre-agricultural societies was based.²⁷

Acquisitive Motive

Beauvoir is most eloquent on the great loss that the woman's exclusion from certain productive activities and consequently from "the conquest of nature", entailed for the development of her personality. To those who claim that giving birth to and rearing a child is an exciting and challenging task in which a woman could find as much fulfilment as would a man in inventing, a scientific principle or in making a new tool, Beauvoir's answer is, "giving birth and suckling are not activities, they are, natural functions; no project is involved; and that is why woman found in them no reason for a lofty affirmation of her existence—she submitted passively to her biological fate."²⁸ A child "does not take her out of her immanence; she shapes his flesh, she nourishes him, she takes care of him. But she can never do more than create a situation that only the child himself as an independent being can transcend; when she lays a stake on his future, her transcendence through the universe and time is still by proxy."²⁹ Fulfilment of one's human potential cannot be vicarious, through someone else; it has to be through one's own activities and experiences. And it is this opportunity that has been historically denied to the woman. Beauvoir is, however, confident that once the woman becomes active and socially productive, she can regain her transcendence and can affirm her status as a "subject". The rapid development of technology which is continuously devaluing muscular power and the increasing control that the woman is acquiring over her reproductive functions indicate to her that woman's liberation is a definite possibility.

Beauvoir clearly sees and accepts the close relationship between woman's subjection and the advent of private property and with Engels sees in the woman's exclusion from social production the key to her fall. Still she believes one must go beyond historical materialism and delve into existentialism—to discover what motivated man to own property and to oppress the woman. Seeking an "original tendency" in the human nature to which the desire to own property could be attributed, she says, "the existent succeeds in finding himself only in estrangement; in alienation Man finds himself in these (land, crop, implements, etc.) goods which are his because he has previously lost himself in them; and it is therefore understandable that he places upon them a value no less fundamental than upon his very life."³⁰

Having explained man's motivation to possess, she still feels it is

impossible to deduce the oppression of woman from the institution of private property itself. Even if the woman's physical inferiority and the development of production techniques had led to a specific pattern of division of labour, she argues, if the original relationship between man and woman was an exclusively friendly one, it is difficult to account for the woman's enslavement later on. For her, the man's motivation to suppress woman has to be rooted in "the nature of his being" and in another of his "original tendency." She writes:

this phenomenon is a result of the imperialism of the human consciousness, working always to exercise its sovereignty in objective fashion. If the human consciousness had not included the original category of the other and an original aspiration to dominate the other, the invention of the bronze tool could not have caused the oppression of woman.⁸¹

Domineering Tendency

What is one to make of the "original category of the other" and the "original aspiration to dominate"? Does it mean that human tendencies are formed independently of the material base—ways in which society produces and distributes the goods—and exist as given, inherent and true for all times? How does one date the "original" in history? Did the aspiration to dominate exist even in the ancient communist society or did it develop in man only after property had become privately owned and one man began to produce surplus for another? Does being determine consciousness or is it the other way around? The idealist strain of Beauvoir⁸² is revealed in her confusing human nature in general with human nature as modified in each historical epoch. As Marx put it, "human essence is not an abstraction inherent in each single individual" and human nature is a given potential which manifests itself differently at different times⁸³. It is a product of social history.

The practical implications of this particular aspect of Beauvoir's theory for women's liberation seems suicidal even from her own perspective. If the "imperialist consciousness" is an independent factor which is rooted in man's innate fear of freedom and his attempts to escape from making his own decisions, independent of the socio-economic context in which man lives, then it logically follows that oppression would continue whether it is a capitalist or socialist system. The system itself becomes peripheral as a determinant of human nature. And this is far from the position that Beauvoir herself takes when she says that true liberation can come only in a system in which the material basis of exploitation—private ownership of the means of production—has ceased to exist: "I never cherished any illusion of changing woman's condition; it depends on the future of labour in the world; it will change significantly only at the price of a revolution in production. That is why I avoided falling into the trap of feminism"⁸⁴.

It is doubtful that there exists today a comprehensive and wholly

satisfying theory delineating the various processes and stages (and the compulsions behind them) through which the woman lost her once-possessed freedom, equality and social esteem and became man's appendage. Such an explanation will remain difficult to offer unless social anthropology throws more light on all facets of the woman's life in primitive societies. In this field, "the gaps are enormous", says Gough⁸⁵. Eleanor B Leacock writes in her introduction to a recent edition of *Origin of the Family*: "There is real need for studies that reconstruct from extant materials on primitive communal and transitional societies something of women's functioning before the development of the male dominance that accompanied European economic and colonial exploitation."⁸⁶ Whatever may be the shortcoming of the historical materialist interpretation of Engels due to lack of data, it serves to thoroughly expose the scholars who, consciously or unconsciously, "distorted or overinterpreted the evidence to bolster beliefs in the inferiority of women's mental processes"⁸⁷ and claimed that sexual inequality had its origin in man's "primate heritage" or in the "genetic codes" which explained the "ubiquity of the male dominance".⁸⁸

FROM BONDAGE TO LIBERATION

Engels has established beyond doubt that the woman's status evolved along with and in response to the development in the means of procuring subsistence. The interlinked development of the implements of production, of labour productivity, of the social institutions of ownership of property, of inheritance, of the forms of marriage and family and of the woman's position, can certainly not be ignored. Stated simply, men who came to play the principal role in social production also, in course of time, took control of that process and dictated to the woman her role. When the majority of women were excluded from the social production process, "the tradition of the privatized female" the woman's degraded status was firmly established and sealed. Yet, to deny any role to the biological characteristics of the woman in this process for fear that admission of such an inherent specificity would be used to perpetuate her oppressed status, will not help us fully to comprehend her historical relegation to a secondary role in society. Once pushed to the background, her lowliness was fortified by all the weapons at the command of civilization—religion, epics, literature, moral codes, social norms, laws and the coercive organs.

How can the woman be liberated or, to be more exact, how can she liberate herself? The starting point of the discussion can only be our perception of how she came to be enslaved in the first place. Notwithstanding the debate that still goes on regarding the original contributory factors; it can be taken as well established that it is the exclusion from social production, which involves mainly putting oneself and testing one's strength against nature, that has over the centuries warped the woman's personality. Maria Dalla Costa describes the impact of exclusion from

social production on the woman most tellingly:

As it (domestic work) cuts off all her possibilities of creativity so it cuts off the expression of her sexual, psychological and emotional autonomy...never had such a stunting of the physical integrity of woman taken place, affecting everything from the brain to the uterus. Participating with others in the production of a train, a car or an airplane is not the same thing as using in isolation the same broom in the same few square feet of kitchen for centuries.³⁹

It follows then that the woman must cease to be a "domestic slave" in order to find socially productive outlets for her creative energies. Engels pointed out that women can re-enter social production only when "private housekeeping is turned into social industry".⁴⁰

Under Capitalism

No one can deny that today even in the most industrialized societies of the west which abound in labour and time-saving gadgets, housework continues to be, as Lenin described graphically, "barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery."⁴¹ It is much worse in the underdeveloped countries for the masses of poor and middle-class women. Writing of the impact of industrial employment, Lenin said "large scale industry emancipates women and...broadens their outlook, makes them more cultured and independent" and "it creates conditions of life that are incomparably superior to the patriarchal immobility of precapitalist relations."⁴² Marx pointed out how the woman's re-entry into the productive process necessitated by the compulsions of capitalist growth despite the many ill-effects, was essentially progressive in freeing her from the "house arrest". Despite the extra burden that industrial employment imposed on the woman who became a "double slave" it was the contact with the outer world that gave the domesticated woman the urge and the ability to rebel against her oppressed status. To quote Dalla Costa again:

To the extent that women were cut off from direct socialized production...they were deprived of social knowledge and social education. When women are deprived of wide experience of organizing and planning collectively industrial and other mass struggles, they are denied a basic source of education, the experience of social revolt. And this experience is primarily the experience of learning your own capacities, that is, your power, and the capacities, the power, of your class. Thus the isolation from which women have suffered has confirmed to society and to themselves the myth of female incapacity.⁴³

This is precisely the reason why capitalism, which has enough to contend with in a male worker, will not allow women in the labour market unless it needs labour power badly and even then will let them in only on its own terms.

The proposition that a woman can develop her human potential to the utmost and fulfil herself, not merely by performing her "natural" role as mother and housewife but by involving herself in the continuous struggle of man to unravel the mysteries of nature and to tame it in the service of humanity, is not likely to go down well with most people, both men and women, here and elsewhere. Even the liberal reformers who have taken up the cause of improving the lot of Indian women workers have bemoaned the tragedy of the *Grahlakshmi* having to leave her cosy hearth under economic compulsions. The positive impact that work outside the home has on the woman's development is rarely ever recognized. The iron grip of obscurantism (religion, superstition, caste and a host of other irrationalities that set one man against another) which has been the special preserve of women, has begun to loosen up only under the offensive of industrial employment.

"*Woman's Place*"

Even in the advanced industrialized countries the official ideologues on women are desperately busy building up the "feminine mystique" and decrying the conditions that necessitate her work outside the home. Now that the woman has had considerable experience in industrial and other kinds of work—the two world wars turned hundreds of thousands of "home-makers" into welders and shipbuilders in the western world—and tasted economic freedom, equality and above all the sense of exhilaration that comes from comprehension and creativity, it is becoming increasingly difficult for official propaganda of the glories of motherhood to make much headway.

It is only when the woman once again becomes socially productive that she can gain an identity of her own and learn to define herself in relation to the larger society and not just her own family. The much glorified mother identity especially in feudal societies like India, where the common appellation for a woman is mother, is in fact only a camouflaged device to reinforce the all exclusive mother image imposed on her by man and to deny her any other identity that transcends the four walls of her home. That it is precisely those societies where motherhood is almost deified that let their mothers kill their children by the dozen (to save them the agony of a cruel and slow death by starvation) is a testimony to the cruel contempt in which motherhood is in fact held.

It is largely true that the working women of the lower classes, although not really free from the impact of the ideology of the woman's inferiority, are still held in much greater respect by their men than are the genteel and frail upper-class housewives by their own men. The earning capacity of the former gives them economic independence, the lack of which has in large measure led to the secondary status of women in general. Comparing the "hard-working woman of the barbarian era" with the "lady of civilization, surrounded by sham homage and estranged from all real work", Engels notes that the latter enjoyed much less social status

than the former who was "regarded among her people as a real lady and was as such by the nature of her position."⁴⁴

The lack of economic independence of women in our society is reflected in their much publicized docility, timidity and compliance. The negative base of so much of the chastity, virtue, and the proverbial toleration of the Hindu wife⁴⁵—financial dependence on the man—is bound to be brutally exposed with the mass entry of women into productive work. Although the starvation wages given to women workers today help shore up many a marriage, it does not detract from the general validity of the claim that economic independence will trigger off the woman's rebellion in the family.

Mass Entry into Social Production

For woman to become once again a part of the social production process the first prerequisite is to create adequate job opportunities, a task to which capitalism the world over has proved unfit. Most serious women's liberation movements have focused their attention on this crucial area. Apart from the traditional demands of the right to work and to equal pay, a third most important demand—the right to the same kinds of jobs—must be added. Otherwise, women will remain condemned to the lower rungs of social production. One requirement to make possible the large-scale entry of women into social production is the creation of communal kitchens, washing rooms; creches and kindergartens. These will drastically reduce the time that each mother has to spend on her children in the seclusion of her home by making all members of the community, men and women alike, share the work. Unless child-rearing and housekeeping cease to be individual and maternal burdens and become a social responsibility, the working woman merely becomes a double slave wearing herself out in the process.

The woman can now, more than ever, choose her pregnancies as she wills and can have legal and safe recourse to abortion in cases of unwanted pregnancies at least in some countries. Thanks to the availability of baby food and day-care centres she need not be tied to the baby too long. As a result, maternity need not be an insuperable obstacle to her career ambitions. This is not to deny that all these facilities are available only to the privileged few in most countries today. However, the fact remains that scientific advance (although not yet developed to the extent of creating an "ecological revolution" with test-tube babies which alone, Firestone claims, would free the woman from the "tyranny of reproduction"⁴⁶) has made and can further make maternity and housekeeping less and less time-consuming and arduous. It is a pointer that the women's dilemma—a mother or a mechanic?—need not be an insoluble one. With increasing sophistication in the production techniques such as automation and computerization, the traditional separation of jobs on the basis of sex and the "superior man's strength and motor power" are becoming less relevant. Could it be a mere coincidence that full employment opportunities for

women and socialization of domestic services to a large extent has occurred only in the socialist countries?

A viewpoint from the left which rejects the proposition that women's entry into social production will help liberate themselves is most powerfully expressed by the Italian writer Mariarosa Dalla Costa.⁴⁷ Contradicting the generally held notion that housework is not socially productive and that it is "personal service outside of capital" she argues that capitalism created not only the proletariat but also the housewife (of the working class) as the slave of a wage slave and an integral part of its productive organization. The housewife is productive for the capitalist organization in many ways. First, in bringing forth children, she produces a commodity, labour power, and thus directly contributes to unpaid labour time or surplus value! Secondly she performs a host of "social services which capitalist organization transforms into privatized activity," which in turn frees the man for direct exploitation. The man is "free to earn enough for a woman to reproduce him as labour power." Her social productivity is invisible because only the "product of her labour" the labourer, is visible. Having been taught by the ideology of "the women's place" to be passive and to sublimate her frustrations, the housewife, says Dalla Costa, acts as a safety valve for the social tensions created by the capitalist organization. She keeps the man going, often acting a strike-breaker and providing an "outlet for all the oppressions that men suffer in the world outside the home". Thus, the man's own indignation and frustration caused by the injustices of the capitalist system are contained and softened by the family in which the woman plays the leading role as the pacifier.

Personal Involvement in Class Struggle

While it cannot be denied that capitalism has a vested interest in keeping the woman in the house and that she performs useful labour, it is far-fetched and incorrect to argue that she creates exchange value by the acts of procreation and rearing of children who later become wage earners. What is of direct relevance here, however, is Dalla Costa's claim that the woman's inclusion in direct socialized labour cannot liberate her. "Slavery to an assembly line is not liberation from slavery to a kitchen sink. To deny this is also to deny the slavery of the assembly line itself."⁴⁸

Here Dalla Costa definitely gets carried away. Slavery to the assembly line is the lot of man himself in the capitalist society and to that extent is the ultimate "liberation" that a woman can look for in that society. True liberation, the end of alienated labour, is manifestly not possible under capitalism for either man or woman. The point however is that if the woman's mind has been stunted by exclusion from socially organized production (even if capitalist-organized) as Dalla Costa herself agrees, then, it is only when she gets back into this social production that the objective conditions for the development of her class identity and of her potential for social rebellion would have been laid. The housewife must first become a productive wage slave and not remain an unpaid slave in

order to be able to fight effectively the system that enslaves people. To claim that she is an integral part of the proletariat will not automatically implant in her the characteristics of the working class or give her the experiences that can come only out of personal involvement in organized class struggle. She can learn to perceive her slavery in the family as rooted in the larger class rule that also oppresses her immediate oppressor—the working class—only when she confronts capital directly in production. The moot point that Dalla Costa surprisingly seems to ignore is that there is no way to gain class identity essential for waging the struggle to overthrow capitalism, except by placing oneself in situations of direct class oppression. This cannot be obtained proxy or by listening to any number of “consciousness-raising” lectures.

Another question frequently asked by some of the liberationists is whether the woman can become fully liberated within the special instruments of oppression, monogamy and the patriarchal family as we know them today; Or, do they need to be destroyed? Zaretski deals at length with the changes that occurred in the family under capitalism and the peculiar alienation experienced by women under it.⁴⁹ In the precapitalist stage the family, despite the division of labour which had already occurred making the woman primarily responsible for house work, remained the basic economic unit of production and hence the woman's work was still integral to production. In the “primary activity of life”, production, women did not feel they were outsiders. The division between the family and the economy was not rigid. Capitalism destroyed this unit by concentrating production away from home in a factory. This radical disjuncture between life and work, between an “inner” world of personal feeling and an outer world of alienated labour, distinguishes social life in developed capitalist society.⁵⁰

Future of the Family

A strong criticism of socialists made by the radical feminists has been that the former, failing to see in the family “the primary institution through which women participate in society” and “the backbone of women's oppression” have not subjected it to a deep analysis, especially the characteristics it assumed under capitalism, with the perspective of women's emancipation. For the radical feminists, the key to liberation is the daily struggle of personal life within the family for which women have to be prepared by raising their consciousness. Zaretski sums up their position:

Radical feminism tended to accept the idea that society was divided between an outer world of politics and economics dominated by men, and an inner world of psychological, which they believed would produce a revolution in the outer, social and historical. Socialism, focused on the economy, ignored the family: it was therefore irrelevant to women's liberation.⁵¹

Here the feminists ignore the crucial fact that in seeking to demolish the

Chinese Wall between the "outer world" and the "inner world" by destroying the material basis for such a segregation (exclusion of women from the productive process) the socialists are in effect altering the very face of the family as it exists today.

The question that remains to be answered is, what of the future of monogamy and family? Engels saw that monogamy which arose from certain economic causes (concentration of wealth in the hands of the man who wanted to bequeath it to his children) will certainly undergo changes under a system of social property when the question of inheritance will lose its relevance. And when women will no longer have to tolerate the man's infidelity due to economic reasons, monogamy, Engels thought, will actually begin to be realized, for it will become monogamy for the man also. The reason why Engels believed that it will not completely disappear was the fuller development under socialist society of "individual sex love" which existed in embryo at the time when monogamy developed.

Working-class Family

In a socialist system where men and women will not be influenced by economic considerations the only motive for marriage remains mutual affection. This will further strengthen the monogamous marriage which will lose its two main characteristics: dominance of man and indissolubility; and become one based on mutual affection and respect. Male dominance will lose considerable ground when the women become economically independent and gain the right to divorce (without having to incur a huge expenditure, wait for several difficult years and submit to many an indignity to satisfy the law). As for the restrictive social code of morality which has hitherto been brutal to the women who had dared to stray, Engels foresaw a radical liberalization. When a new generation arises in which human relations, especially between man and woman, have not been polluted by economic considerations, those people "will not care a rap about what we today think they should do. They will establish their own practice and their own public opinion, conformable therewith, on the practice of each individual—and that's the end of it."⁵² As to what might happen in the distant future, Engels makes no predictions:

As the monogamous family improved greatly since the commencement of civilization—it is at least supposable that it is capable of still further improvement until the equality of the sexes is attained. Should the monogamous family in the distant future fail to answer the requirements of society it is impossible to predict the nature of its successor.⁵³

Thus, the feminists' call to "destroy the family" and its counter "defend the family" seem diversionary to the liberation movement. Dalla Costa's call to the working-class women, for instance, to "fight the family", can only succeed in dividing the already eroded unity of the working class by setting the woman against the man.⁵⁴ It is one thing to

make the woman conscious of how capitalism has degraded human relationships, turned the family into an organ of sexual oppression and to bring her out of "house arrest" to fight the system (in this process to encourage her to assert her equal right to social protest) and quite another to encourage direct confrontation with a part of her own class, which can only add to the capitalist glory. The necessary task is to enable her to see beyond her immediate oppressor—father, husband or son—and to identify the root cause of social slavery and to fight it along with all those enslaved by it. The answer to "destroy the family" cannot be "defence of the family" as it operates in the existing class societies. As a publication of the Communist Party of Great Britain says:

Surely our correct aim is to fight to make the family disentangle from capitalism and shed its reactionary aspects. The family can then become a weapon against capitalism. Many a working-class family, where there is a common acceptance of a working-class outlook and a deep solidarity, has already become a partial bulwark of struggle against reaction.⁵⁵

Women under Socialism

No one can accurately predict the future forms of marriage or family. Engels refused to do so. All that can be safely said is that socialism lays the material conditions which alone can convert them from organs that contain and stifle women, into relations of creative solidarity of the two sexes and between parents and children. We need shed no tears should these, in some distant future, cease to exist in their present form and evolve into forms which may seem undesirable, judged from our existing social norms and values. As Gough put it, "There is no need to legislate personal relations out of existence. But neither need we fear a social life in which the family is no more."⁵⁶

We now come to the final and most important aspect of the question of women's liberation: the proposition that her entry into social production en masse, the consequent changes in the institutions of marriage and family and in the social attitudes to women, are possible only in a socialist system. Unlike capitalism, it has no vested interest in keeping a reserve army of unemployed women or in using them as strike breakers and rate busters. Only where the objective conditions of exploitation, whether of man by man or woman by woman, have been removed by socializing the means of production does it become meaningful to talk of women's emancipation. We have irrefutable proof of this in history.

It is only the socialist economy that affords full employment to its people, men or women. Although American women constitute 38 per cent of the labour force, as against 50 per cent in the Soviet Union, the inherent threat of unemployment in the American economy has led to the government using all available devices to discourage women from working. Apart from the ideological offensive against working women, which tries to discourage them from seeing themselves in career roles,

several negative incentives are used. Non-provision of adequate child-care facilities has been a deliberate policy of the United States government to keep unemployment figures down. The policy-makers are well aware of the tremendous pressures that women would otherwise exert on the employment market. Lack of creche facilities, lower pay and discriminatory employment practices keep women confined to low-paying, manual and unskilled jobs. An overwhelming majority of women are confined to the traditionally 'feminine' jobs like teachers, nurses, office secretaries, waitresses, beauticians and sales girls with low salaries and low social esteem. In times of economic crises like the present, women along with the racial and ethnic minorities are the first to lose the job.⁵⁷

In the Soviet Union

The USSR presents a glaring contrast to this dismal picture of the supposedly most pampered and privileged women of the world's mightiest nation. One of the very first actions of the young socialist state was to end, by one stroke of the pen, the extremely unfavourable position the Russian women had in marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, education and job opportunities. A system of production based mainly on private profit necessarily sees the employment of women as a wasteful and non-productive expenditure because of statutory provisions like maternity benefits and restrictions of nightwork and higher absenteeism due to the working woman's care of children. Women are employed only in the event of real manpower shortage or with a desire to have a tame, "disciplined" workforce. Not so in the socialist system which by definition produces not for the aggrandisement of a few but for the satisfaction of genuine human needs.

It is only a socialist country that does not condemn women to be part-time workers for most of their lives; it provides inexpensive and quality community services for child care and for other domestic chores on a massive scale. The American government was so embarrassed by the enormous number of day-care centers run by the Soviet government that it had to offer its own women a malicious explanation describing them as "sadder Soviet devices to extract labour from mothers at the expense of their little children."⁵⁸ The resolution of the conflict between the demands of motherhood and professionalism is not left to the individual mother to be worked out as best as she could, but the mother is actively helped in many ways by the community. That the varied benefits accorded to women have resulted not in formal but real equality can be seen in the fact that the Soviet woman is far ahead of her sisters in the capitalist nations on several fronts. Seventy-three per cent of Soviet doctors are women as against seven in the United States. Thirty per cent of engineers and one-third of all judges are women.⁵⁹ More striking is the fact that it is very common for a Soviet woman to be seen as a railway engine driver, a heavy-vehicle operator, a miner, a machinist or a host of other things that men usually are in the capitalist world. Sexual segregation by job

categories has long since broken up.

In People's China

The status of Chinese women today, compared to what it was three decades ago, is a dramatic testimony to the ability of the socialist system to pull women out of their centuries-old servility. Old Chinese sayings like "noodles are not rice and women are not human beings" and "a wife married is like a pony bought; I'll ride her and whip her as I like" are today replaced by slogans such as "What the man can do, the woman can do" and "Women hold up half the sky."⁶⁰

Women's liberation was adopted by the Chinese Communist Party as an integral part of the national liberation movement in old China. Jack Belden wrote:

An all out attempt to free women could only result in the upheaval of the whole social pyramid and a tremendous change in the correlation of the forces struggling for power. That is why the Communists fought so hard for equality of women and why the more feudal-minded moralists of the Kuomintang never lost an opportunity to inveigh against the Communist destruction of the Chinese family. In the first case, the freeing of women was a means of breaking the old power; in the second case, shackling of women was a means of preserving the power.⁶¹

Since the revolution, concerted efforts have gone into raising the status of women by encouraging their active participation in production, revolution, politics and culture. The little women with bound feet of whom it was once said, "potatoes women plant won't sprout" have turned into 'iron girls' the title that a group of young girls in Tachai earned in praise of their incredibly hard work in a fiercely hostile natural environment.

The Chinese women have not merely entered social production in a big way—the word 'housewife' is becoming an anomaly as more and more housewives take to setting up neighbourhood factories—but more importantly are breaking traditional barriers against women in heavy and skilled jobs. Women in New China are oil extractors and airline pilots. They clear forests, build bridges and go deep-sea fishing. "What the man can do the woman can do" is no more a mere saying.

To free the women from household drudgery, chores like laundry, sewing and mending are collectivized. Common canteens provide cheap and quality food everywhere. Creches are run by factories, communes, offices and neighbourhood committees which help give a communal identity to children from infancy. This has a liberating impact on the mother and child by reducing the

prolonged interdependence between the children and their natural mothers...Socialized virtually from infancy, they do not often display pathological fears of outsiders; adults are simply all 'aunts and uncles'.

In this context, western insistence on the exclusive commitment of the

mother to the emotional development of her child appears as simply another justification for keeping women at home.⁶²

The problems that women workers face as women are given special consideration by trade unions which concern themselves not merely with working conditions but also with the family problems. Women representatives of the union visit the workers' homes and help solve problems like care of children and old people, and uncooperative husbands who do not share housework, health or financial difficulties. Such communal approach to the working women's problems help "undercut potential feelings of loneliness or inadequacy faced by individual women in their homes which is so characteristic of housewives in capitalist societies."⁶³

The Chinese awareness that only the correct ideological understanding of the masses ensure that old Confucian ideas about women will not reassert themselves, has led to the emphasis placed on the participation of all women, young and old, illiterate and educated, in political study classes. This seems the most important aspect of women's liberation movement in China.

Criticism and Self-criticism

The radical feminists and other non-socialist groups within the western women's movement, who hold that women are oppressed because they are women and that theirs is a struggle of the entire female sex against the male sex, deny that women are being liberated in the socialist countries. Two arguments are usually advanced. First, although the percentage of women in professional jobs is the highest in the USSR, within these professions their job pattern is still traditionally determined. Health and education, traditionally acceptable women's professions, continue to attract the largest number of women as against industrial professions. Even within these professions women are rarely decision-makers, holding only lower positions. Political power, it is claimed, is still the monopoly of the male. Susan Sontag, arguing that liberation is a matter not of mere equality but of power, says: "All women live in an 'imperialist' situation in which men are colonialists and women are natives. In the... Third World... the situation... is tyrannically, brutally colonialist. In economically advanced countries (both capitalist and socialist) the situation of women is neo-colonialist. The segregation of women has been liberalized."⁶⁴

It is not only the anti-communists who level these charges against the socialist countries. The struggle for women's emancipation is a self-critical process in several socialist countries where a long distance has to be travelled before the full liberation of women can be said to be an actual reality. It is well recognized and frankly admitted. A speech by Fidel Castro at the second session of the Federation of Cuban Women a year ago is illustrative of this self-critical attitude.⁶⁵ Fidel noted ruefully that the number of women holding leading posts in the administration was only 15 per cent and that feminine membership of the party was

only 13 per cent. The fact that seems to have brought home to Fidel that 16 years of the revolutionary regime is too brief a period for revolutionary changes in man's thinking was that in the elections held for people's power in the province of Matanzas only 7.6 per cent of women were selected as candidates and that the number of women elected was only 3 per cent. Fidel admitted to his people that it showed the "reality that after more than 15 years of revolution, we are still politically and culturally behind in this area."⁶ Assuring the Cuban men that there was nothing to fear in the battle for women's equality, he added, "what should really frighten us as revolutionaries is that we have to admit the reality that women still do not have absolute equality in Cuban society."⁷

Cultural Revolution

Another criticism flung at the socialist countries is that the woman there plan very much the traditional role of the housekeeper even while she is employed outside. Male ideas about housework being the woman's exclusive preserve remain. The Chinese at any rate seem to face such hangovers from the past squarely by turning them into the national process of criticism, struggle and transformation. An article in the *People's Daily*, a year ago, described such survivals from the past:

In the aspect of family life, the remnant influence of husband authority...is also in existence. Some couples take part in collective production, work together and yet do not share housework. There is still the phenomenon that 'women go home to cook meals, feed the pigs and shut up chicken, whilst men go home to smoke their pipes and wait for food and drink'. In the aspect of social convention and custom even more pernicious Confucian ideas linger on...For example ...sayings like 'a family with only daughters is a dead-end family.'⁸

The significant point is not that such ideas persist but that they are faced candidly and serious attempts are made at every level—factory, commune, neighbourhood committee, study groups—to initiate discussions on them in order to educate the people to help transform their false consciousness. Viewed against the significant strides made by the Chinese women since the Revolution, certain shortcomings that have been pointed out or the survival of some archaic thoughts pale into insignificance.

To admit that there might be some validity in the allegations levelled against socialist countries is neither to deny that Marxism is a liberating ideology nor to concede that the socialist system has not created the objective conditions which alone can break all barriers to women's equality. The relevant fact to remember is that what the socialist countries are seeking to do is to destroy an established reality—woman as the lowly, as the 'other,' as the blind one—deliberately nurtured over thousands of years. And the oldest socialist state has had but sixty years to do it. Further, a fact that tends to be lost sight of, even within the socialist countries and sometimes with grave consequences to the liberation process, is that the setting up of a socialist structure in itself is not a guarantee

that the liberation of women will be achieved automatically.

A conscious and sustained struggle in the realm of the superstructure—values, ideas, beliefs and perceptions—has to be carried on for a long time as vestiges of old social habits and thoughts long survive the changes in the economic base. It has not proved easy to make a man accept wholeheartedly what a Russian woman said, “the kitchen will belong to anyone who wants to eat”: The *People's Daily* wrote on Women's Day in 1973:

China was under feudal rule for 2000 years and the exploiting classes left behind deep-rooted ideas discriminating against women and looking upon them as slaves and appendages. Today, class and class struggle still exist in our society and it is still impossible to eliminate completely the remnants of the old ideas of looking down upon women. Neglecting to train more women cadres, giving men and women unequal pay for equal work in rural areas, showing unwillingness to accept women as workers in some factories, and the remaining feudal influences in marriage—all these are a reflection of such old ideas. It is necessary to wage a protracted struggle against them so as to overcome the idea of looking upon woman as inferior.⁶⁹

A series of cultural revolutions alone can rout what Lenin termed the “most deep-rooted, inveterate, hide-bound and rigid order”.⁷⁰

Separate but Not Autonomous

The liberation of women in socialist countries is still a continuing movement. While no one can claim that the woman has become the man's equal in any contemporary society, it must still be recognized that the “ubiquity of male dominance” has been seriously eroded only in socialist countries and can be ultimately broken only in a socialist society. Then it follows that in non-socialist societies, a meaningful movement of women's liberation can only be an integral part of the wider movement of revolutionary struggle for socialism. This is in fact an objective necessity. To the extent that women's movement, focusing attention only on the personal aspects of male domination, builds autonomous organizations that stand outside of the democratic or socialist movement, they are likely to end up as opportunist, diversionary, or at best, utopian. Women do need an organization of their own, “separate but not autonomous” as the Chinese stress, to fight for demands that have immediate and direct relevance to them as women and as workers. They need this organization even in a socialist country until complete equality is achieved. But isolation of such a movement from the struggles of other oppressed sections of society can only be self-defeating.

The experience of all countries where women fought in revolutionary struggles show that such an experience is the most potent liberator of women. Religious fanaticism, traditionalism, caste and other irrationalities which have had a special grip on women have been known to disappear in the face of revolutionary upheavals. It is the revolutionary experience which emancipates women ideologically without which their

infinite source of power will remain bottled up. We have seen in the heroism of the Vietnamese women fighters how invincible that power could be once it found an outlet. The war in Vietnam made no distinction between man and woman. Both took to guns and both died of bullets. The undernourished Vietnamese peasant women made dramatic inroads into what was historically considered the man's exclusive prerogative, the armed forces. The Vietnamese woman who was not merely an army nurse but an armed fighter shattered and put to ridicule not only the white man's image of the puny Asiatics, the eternal coolies, but the male view of the female as a born weakling who can survive only by his benevolence.

The experience of the Vietnamese holds out the hope that the liberation of the much oppressed women steeped in feudal values, like the Indian women, need not necessarily be a tortuously long process. For the Indian woman the path to liberation is the path of struggle. And that is the struggle of all the Indian working people for the right to live, to be educated, to be productively occupied and to live as human beings in freedom and dignity.

Liberation is Indivisible

The intent in this article as noted earlier, was not to research in depth the past of the woman or to pronounce on every aspect and phase of the historical process that continually denuded her of power and social prestige. A review of some of the major works on this subject have brought to light some basic features of her social evolution. The woman, we find, has not always been the "second sex". The gradual erosion of her authority was concomitant with changes in the economy and the division of labour within it. With the rise of class society, where some owned the means of production and the others worked for them, the woman's subordination in the family and in society was well established. The earlier freedom and equality in sexual relations had yielded place to monogamy which strictly enforced the woman's, but not the man's, chastity. The process of the woman's exclusion from social labour seems to have been, to some extent, aided by her biological specificity. Once she was pushed to the background she was restrained there by religious sanction and, when necessary, by brute force.

The story of the woman's past is a pointer that since the woman's subjection was socially conditioned, it can also be socially altered. As Gough says:

The sexual division of labour, until recently universal, need not, and ...should not, survive in industrial society. Prolonged child care ceased to be a basis for female subordination when artificial birth-control, spaced birth, small families, patent feeding, and communal nurseries allow it to be shared by men. Automation and cybernation remove most of the heavy work for which women are not as well equipped as men. The exploitation of women that came with the rise

of the state and of class society will presumably disappear in post-state, classless society—for which the technological and scientific basis already exists.^{7 1}

What is needed is the socialist revolution which alone can ensure that the great strides made in science will not remain chained to the whims and fancies of an exploiting few but will be consciously utilized to further human liberation. In the ultimate sense, the woman's liberation is inseparable from that of the man.

¹ August Bebel, *Woman under Socialism*. Schocken Books, New York 1971.

² *Ibid.*, p 9.

³ Quoted in *Monthly Review*, September 1973, New York, p 52.

⁴ Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, Penguin Books, 1971, p 55.

⁵ Title of a book by Betty Frieden, published in the USA in 1963, which was a source of great inspiration to the Women's Liberation movement.

⁶ Quoted in Eli Zaretski, "Socialist Politics and the Family" in *Socialist Revolution*, January-March, 1974, p 92.

⁷ Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1968.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p 155.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 49.

¹⁰ For an elaboration of this comment see Rosemary Small, *Marxism and the Family*, Pamphlet of the Communist Party, London 1974.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 155.

¹² *Ibid.*, p 158.

¹³ Bebel, *op. cit.*, p 30.

¹⁴ Engels, *op. cit.*, p 57.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p 65.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p 66.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p 75.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p 58.

¹⁹ Small, *op. cit.*, explains why she prefers the term "molecular" to the widely used "nuclear": "How can the family be a nucleus (something around which other things accumulate?) It is a molecule (a stable combination of simple atoms) and Engels himself uses this word to describe it."

²⁰ Karen Sacks, "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production and Private Property" in Rayna R Raites (ed), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, Monthly Review Press, 1975, p 211.

²¹ Kathleen Gough, "The Origin of the Family", *Toward an Anthropology of Women, op. cit.* Attributing the woman's subordination to a combination of the needs of prolonged child care in primitive technology, she elaborates: "in any case it was largely a matter of survival... than of man-made cultural imposition. Hence the impressions we receive of dignity, freedom and mutual respect between men and women in primitive hunting and horticultural societies." (p 75.) See also Gough, "An Anthropologist Looks at Engels," in Nona Glazer-Malbin and Helen Youngelson Waehrer (eds), *Woman In A Man-made World*, Rand Mc Nally, Chicago 1972.

²² Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Penguin Books, 1974.

²³ *Ibid.*, p 65.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 69.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p 94.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 94.

²⁷ Gough, "The Origin of the Family", *op. cit.*, p 74.

²⁸ Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p 94.

- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p 539.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p 88.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p 89.
- ³² Beauvoir herself seems to have been critical, in a later work of her earlier criticism: "I should take a more materialist position today... I should base the notion of woman as *other* and the Manichean argument it entails not on an idealistic and a priori struggle [of consciences, but on the facts of supply and demand", Quoted in Juliet Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p 81.
- ³³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *German Ideology*, International Publishers, New York p 198.
- ³⁴ Quoted in Juliet Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p 65.
- ³⁵ Gough, "The Origin of the Family", *op. cit.*, p 51.
- ³⁶ Quoted in Rosemary Small, *op. cit.*
- ³⁷ Gough, "The Origin of the Family", *op. cit.*, p 75.
- ³⁸ For an elaboration of such a view see Lionel Tiger, "The Possible Biological Origins on Sexual Discrimination", in Cynthia Fuchs and Epstein Goods(eds), *The Other Half Roads to Women's Equality*, Prentice Hall Inc.
- ³⁹ Mariarosa Dalla Costa, "Women and the Subversion of the Community", *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, Falling Wall Press, England 1973.
- ⁴⁰ Engels, *op. cit.*,
- ⁴¹ V I Lenin, "Women and Society", *The Woman Question*, International Publishers, New York 1973, p 56.
- ⁴² V I Lenin, *On the Emancipation of Women*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965, p 18.
- ⁴³ Dalla Costa, *op. cit.*, pp 27-28.
- ⁴⁴ Engels, *op. cit.*, p 50.
- ⁴⁵ The nauseating extent to which the *Pathivrita* concept was developed in the Hindu epics is reflected in the story of Nalayini, who willingly carried her leprous husband on her shoulders to the house of his mistress.
- ⁴⁶ Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, Paladin, 1970. Firestone who believes that nature produced the fundamental inequality, makes the "revolutionary demand" that woman be freed from the "tyranny of reproduction by every means possible and the diffusion of the child rearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women." p 193.
- ⁴⁷ Dalla Costa, *op. cit.*, pp 33-49.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p 33.
- ⁴⁹ Zaretski, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p 91.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p 88.
- ⁵² Engels, *op. cit.*, p 83.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p 83.
- ⁵⁴ Dalla Costa, *op. cit.* Elaborating on the need to fight the family, she says that it is "the support of the worker, but as worker, and for that reason the support of capital. On this family depends the support of the class, the survival of the class but at the woman's expense against the class itself." p 39.
- ⁵⁵ Peter Pink, *Marxism and the Family*, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁶ Gough, "The Origin of the Family" *op. cit.*, p 76.
- ⁵⁷ Renee Blakkan, "1974: Women's Place in Labour," *Guardian*, Labour Supplement, Fall 1974, New York, provides some revealing facts: "In 1973 the official unemployment rate for women was 6% compared to 4% for men. For black women over 20, the official rate was 8.2%. But the actual jobless rate for women is much higher. Lost in the shuffle of statistics are all those women who would like to work but cannot due to child care and other responsibilities in the home."
- ⁵⁸ Quoted in Judith Hole and Ellen Lavine, *Rebirth of Feminism*. Quadrangle Books ANYT Co., 1971.

- ⁶⁹ *Women in the Soviet Union*, Progress Publishers, 1970.
- ⁶⁰ For a good insight on the problem of Chinese women, see Elisabeth Croll, *The Women's Movement in China, A Selection of Readings 1949-1973*, Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute, London 1974.
- ⁶¹ Rosalind Delmar, "Fighting Traditions," *China Now*, March 1975, London.
- ⁶² Ellen Leopold, "The Anomaly of the Housewife", *China Now*, *op. cit.*, p 4.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p 4
- ⁶⁴ For such criticisms, see Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, "Woman of the World: Report from Mexico City", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 54, No 1, October 1975. She writes that although women in the Soviet Union "constitute a majority of the specialized labour force, their participation decreases sharply as they reach upper levels. Only 6% of the heads of industrial enterprises are women. Their representation in the Communist Party...is...about 22%. The number reaching the Party's Central Committee has never been higher than 4% and only one woman has ever been a member of the Presidium." p 179.
- ⁶⁵ Susan Sontag, "The Third World of Women," *Partisan Review*, No 2, 1973, p 184.
- ⁶⁶ Fidel Castro, *The Revolution Has in Cuban Women Today an Impressive Political Force*, a pamphlet of the Instituto Cubano del Libro, Habana, 1974.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p 12.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 15-16.
- ⁶⁹ Delmar, *op. cit.*, p 4.
- ⁷⁰ Quoted in Elisabeth Croll, *op. cit.*, p 88.
- ⁷¹ V I Lenin, *On the Emancipation of Women*, *op. cit.*, p 84.
- ⁷² Gough, "The Origin of the Family", *op. cit.*, p 75.

KUMARESH CHAKRAVARTY

Employment, Incomes and Equality

THE INTERNATIONAL Women's Year, planned much earlier in 1969 by the United Nations, has served to highlight the women's question in India. What for so long had been the concern of left and democratic parties, and social welfare organizations, suddenly received unprecedented attention in government and academic circles. Recent official publications, and particularly the rather voluminous report of the Committee on the Status of Women,¹ therefore deserve special scrutiny.

These studies reveal an increasing recognition of economic inequality between men and women in participation rate, wages, and conditions of work. Although the conventional and popular approach to the problem as one of cultural backwardness, casteism or communalism is going out of fashion, the primary task of comprehensively defining the women's question in India is still to be accomplished. Even the basic outline of a programme for women's emancipation—not just 'modernization' in the western sociological parlance—cannot be chalked out without first clearly defining the question, which alone can lead to a correct causation framework. In this vast country, in hundreds of forms, social oppression of women exists. Relatively well known are the landlord's or the master's right of the first night; the highly sanctified bargaining for fixing the price (dowry) of the bridegroom in the marriage market; the widow's bondage and the

woman's exclusive responsibility for 'protection of chastity'; discrimination in religious rituals; unequal access to educational opportunities and, most barbarous of all, the killing, rape and burning of poorer women, particularly Harijans. These are the legacies of the traditional obscurantism in a precapitalist society.

Does modernization of the kind we come across in western industrial societies show us the way out of the mess? Male domination in the west manifests itself in the subtle forms of an all-round commercialization of sex, the mad competition for mini-skirts and bikinis, the market price of film stars fluctuating with their box-office appeal. There is a total disappearance of what Lenin called 'culture' from man-woman relationships. This is indirectly reflected in art and literature. To a certain extent, has it not already become a feature of Indian society also? The creeping decadence in Indian art and literature, particularly in films and fiction with morbid emphasis on sex, is all too flagrant. The plight of working women, particularly among those doing white collar jobs but unable to accept commercialization of sex as a value, is not difficult to understand. The pseudo-Women's Liberation of moribund monopoly capital and the feudal right of the first night are in peaceful co-existence in India. But this is the inevitable trait of a society that suffers from superimposition of capitalism on precapitalist relations and forms of exploitation.

What the Committee Saw

Only 18.7 per cent or about 49.3 million women were literate in 1971. Of the total literates, 19.7 millions had not achieved any educational level and only 17.5 millions had attained primary school level. Women's literacy rate in rural areas was 4 per cent in Rajasthan, 6.4 per cent in Bihar, 6.1 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 7 per cent in Uttar Pradesh and 13.2 per cent in India as a whole. Urban literacy rates varied between 28.4 per cent in Jammu and Kashmir and 60.6 per cent in Kerala.^a

Women in India belong to different religions, communities and castes. The largest proportion of low-caste Hindus, tribals, and Muslims are among the poorest of the poor. Occupationally, the scheduled castes and tribes in particular constitute the bulk of poor peasants, landless labourers including bonded labour, migrant labourers including casual or contract labour, handloom weavers, domestic servants, sweepers, scavengers and so forth.

Regional variations in agricultural wages, employment and poverty generally tend to be correlated with literacy rates and low-caste or tribal proportions in the population. In other words the degree of poverty and the extent and forms of social oppression go together. A more concrete picture of women's oppression can therefore be drawn only if regional, class or group positions are examined in detail.

The influence of religion or religion-based norms varies from one social group and region to another. Except in abstract terms, or at superficial levels, characterization of all Hindu women or all Muslim

women as having uniform socio-religious values in all parts of the country is no more than an exercise in metaphysics. Besides, while religion forms an important source of values, mores and attitudes, the basis for all obscurantism lies not so much in the religious faith or loyalty to traditional rituals or norms as in the material conditions of living. Avoiding the pitfalls of 'economic determinism' is very important, but no less important is it to remember that the root of social oppression lies essentially in the instruments and relations of production.

The Committee on the Status of Women in India seems to have recognized this truth when it states:

In our highly complex and extremely diversified society, women in different religious groups, caste levels, economic strata, and those belonging to tribal, rural, and urban areas merit separate consideration. Differences in customs and norms and in conditions of their operation across groups and categories make it imperative for us to adopt this approach.⁸

Soon this approach fades out in a 64-page description of more important forms of oppression like ploygamy, dowry system, widowhood and prostitution. Even this elaboration is not without use for an exposition of the problem. A long summarization of different religious systems and their norms, under the assumption that responses of all Hindu women to their religion are the same, leaves the relationship between religion and women's oppression totally undefined. The approach of differentiated but interconnected study of regional and group peculiarities remains nothing more than a promise or wishful thinking.

Formalistic Approach to Participation

Consequently, the chapter on political status of women largely follows the methodology of behavioural social science: tabulating percentage figures of men and women voters and listing the number of women candidates in elections to state and central legislatures. The chapter on socio-cultural setting of women's status does not mention even one of the hundreds of instances of rapes and killings of landless women labourers, or of assaults by political hoodlums. The largest number of organized political actions of women took place in post-independence India during the committee's own life-time, 1972-74. Strangely enough, several women's demonstrations against price rise and on other issues (especially in Maharashtra) which made front-page headlines in newspapers failed to get even a passing mention in the committee's report.

The official concept of participation is mainly a formal one, synonymous with the status of the 'gainfully employed' or unemployed, in terms of which economic dependence is measured. Of the 264 million women in India in 1971, only 31.3 million were reported as workers. The number of women in the age group 15-59 were 136.3 million. Of total 'workers' 2.8 million came from the age group 0-14. Assuming that the rest of the workers, that is, 28.5 million came from the age group 15-59, 107.8 million

women in this age group were idle and dependent on others, though most of them would have liked to work, if work were available. Out of the total women workers, about 28 millions were rural and a little more than 3 million were in the urban areas. 32.6 per cent of rural workers were classified as cultivators, and 54.4 per cent as agricultural labourers. All the rural women workers constituting 87 per cent of Indian working women were underemployed, mostly out of work except when agricultural operations were on.

According to the Rural Labour Enquiry of 1964-65, the number of paid man-days was only 149 in agriculture. Calculated on this basis, about 15.7 million, or more than 54 per cent of the 28 million rural women workers had gainful work for at best half the year. Even the figures of 107.8 million unemployed and 15.1 million underemployed should be enough to indicate that in an economy where agriculture provides the bulk of employment, the magnitude of economic dependence of women or of their real participation in socially productive work cannot be measured by the census concept of 'participation'. Real participation is primarily a matter of property relations, and in India, of property relations in agriculture. The committee is not unaware of facts and it has taken pains to find them. The inter-census data quoted in the report reveal that women's participation rate has gone down sharply from 27.63 per cent in 1921 to 11.85 per cent in 1971,⁴ with possibly an illusory increase in 1961. And men have fared no better.

Agricultural Workers

Besides, the rate of decline in participation is not high in the case of women agricultural labourers. The average number of wage-earners (all persons) in agricultural labour households was 2 in 1950-51, 2.03 in 1956-57, and 2.04 in 1964-65. The averages for women wage-earners per household was 0.80 in 1950-51, 0.74 in 1956-57, and 0.76 in 1964-65. Women agricultural labourers totalled 14.5 million in 1950-51, 12.1 million in 1956-57, 11.1 million in 1964-65, and 15.7 million in 1971⁵. But these figures do not tell the real story, since the rise and fall in the number of agricultural labourers are not explained except by reference to the corresponding trend for poor peasants, about whom comparable data are not available. The poor peasant women work for a few days on their tiny plot of land but are not technically called agricultural labourers unless half or more of their income come from agricultural wages.

The importance of these two sections of women is not unknown to the committee. It states: "the largest of these categories (whose socio-economic status has to be taken into account) consists of the women below subsistence level...In rural areas, they are the landless agricultural labourers, members of households with uneconomic holdings, those engaged in traditional menial services performed by particular castes."⁶ The big increase in the number of agricultural labourers and relative decrease in the number of poor peasants between 1961 and 1971 is the

general trend. The report very rightly declares:

The increase in the number of (women) agricultural labourers from 12.6 millions in 1951, to 15.7 millions in 1971... is the greatest indicator of increasing poverty and reduction in the level of employment and not of improving rights and opportunities for economic participation...the decline of women cultivators from 183.6 lakhs in 1951 to 92.6 lakhs in 1971, i.e. by nearly 50 per cent, can be attributed to increasing pauperization leading to loss of land or inadequate growth of productive employment growth on family farms, leading to withdrawal of women from cultivation.⁶

Thus increasing 'participation' of women as agricultural labourers, and decreasing 'participation' of women 'cultivators' are both indicative of pauperization and declining opportunities. Clearly, the question is not one of formal participation only, but also of general decline in opportunities for real economic participation. Men's participation also declined from 58.13 per cent in 1961 to 53.46 per cent in 1971. Male domination has many facets, but seen out of this context, search for men-women equality within the existing position would mean nothing but equality in poverty levels.

Peasant Women

Agriculture occupies more than 70 per cent of the total work force in India. In 1971, more than 80 per cent women 'workers' were in agriculture and 81 per cent of total women population was rural. In absolute figures 214 million women lived in rural India in 1971 and about 25 out of 31 million women 'workers' were engaged in agriculture.⁷ Further, "in agrarian societies, the family is the unit of production...Among the agricultural classes in most parts of the country and particularly among the marginal and landless agriculturists, earning a livelihood is still a family endeavour with or without division of labour between men, women and children".⁸ The middle and poor peasants, constituting the overwhelming bulk of the peasantry, have no taboos about their women working in the field or doing other agricultural work. Only a section of rich peasants may withdraw their women from manual work. But in general the question of the peasant's preference arises only when not enough land is available for full absorption of family labour, and in the case of an agricultural labourer when not enough work is available. As for non-agricultural work, its percentage to total employed days was only 6 per cent for poor peasant women and 9 per cent for women agricultural labourers in 1971.⁹

The changing percentage of women agricultural labourers to total agricultural labourers—40.4 in 1950-51, 36.5 in 1956-57, 36.9 in 1964-65 and about 34 in 1971¹⁰—could be explained if we had land census data for these periods. But even on the basis of whatever information for 1970-71 or after is available, a correlation between these trends and those in the landownership pattern can be discerned. For example, increases in the proportion of poor peasants to total landowners have been reported from

at least eight states: Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Karnataka.¹¹ If to this is added the list of states where percentage increase of agricultural labourers has been higher during 1961-71, a direct correlation emerges between landownership and women's employment. For example, in Orissa, the decline in percentage of rural women workers to total rural women population has been highest at 51.47 per cent and the percentage of households cultivating less than one acre was also the highest at 76.2 per cent in 1970-71.¹² Percentages of such decline in rural women workers were 41 in Tamil Nadu, 49.66 in Uttar Pradesh, 37.85 in Madhya Pradesh, 29.37 in Maharashtra, 48.18 in Rajasthan, 41.72 in Gujarat, and 42.80 in Karnataka.¹³

Family Income

Wages of women workers as part of the family income cannot be quantified adequately. Different wage survey reports and the recent Reserve Bank survey are available in addition to the data cited by the committee. The National Commission on Labour testifies to wide prevalence of child labour, and so does the Committee on the Status of Women. The National Sample Survey data about child labour, particularly for the period 1959-60

TABLE I

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE CHILD LABOUR TO TOTAL FEMALE
POPULATION IN RURAL INDIA¹⁴

Age group	15th Round 1959-60	17th Round 1961-62	19th Round 1964-65	21st Round 1966-67
5-9/11	3.48	1.16	1.99	2.77
10/12-14	26.39	12.90	18.17	19.89

to 1966-67, are rather revealing. These children are generally called 'unpaid family workers'. In addition, boys and girls do different kinds of household chores like child care and cooking when parents go out to work. 'Unpaid family workers' or child labourers are mostly not 'gainfully' employed.

Family income therefore remains a function mainly of the size of landholding, rate of agricultural wage, number of wage-earners in a family, and the number of days of gainful work. Landholding-size data for 1971 are still not available. The committee's statistics on wages in several states in 1970 and 1971 are monthly figures and no calculation of annual income is possible unless the number of days of 'gainful' employment is known. Wage discrimination and low rates for women were obvious to the committee which notes many state governments encouraging these practices by legally fixing unequal wage rates. According to the agricultural Labour Enquiry of 1964-65, average per capita income of an agricultural women labourer varied between Rs 313.20 and Rs 414 per year or between Rs 26.20 and Rs 34.00 per month. If the average number of wage earners

per household and average wage difference between men and women workers is taken into account, a broad assessment of total agricultural income of the family can be made. But one thing is clear: calculated on the basis of the 1970-71 wage figures of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics cited by the committee, the income of women agricultural labourers or their family income will be still lower than Rs 26.20 or Rs 34 (taking into account, of course, the number of days of gainful employment).

What has escaped the attention of the committee is that wage income from agricultural work has fallen steeply between 1961 and 1971, and also between 1964 and 1971. The sharp decline in family income, of the agricultural labour households in West Bengal in 1970-71 has been brought out recently. Certain low-paid work like weeding, harvesting and winnowing used to be reserved almost solely for women. With the decline in actual wage rates and agricultural employment in certain regions, men started doing these operations and partly replacing women. Punjab wage figures, for example, do not include women except as weeders only.

Of 1.3 million women workers in the 'household industry', 1 million were in the rural areas. Data about these are scanty. Textiles and tobacco workers constitute a substantial proportion of them. The plight of handloom weavers and their survival at the mercy of yarn manufacturers, big business, moneylenders, and wholesale traders are fairly well known. Several reports about beedi workers published during the last four or five years reveal their miserable existence. But the committee gives no useful data, not even on the number of workers, levels of employment and income, and the trends of growth or decline in these industries.

Industrial Workers

All the 0.8 million women workers reported as working in industry 'other than household' in the 1971 Census are not accounted for in the factory employment figures of the relevant period. Nor are 0.1 million mining and quarrying women workers in mining employment data. The latest publication of the Ministry of Labour gives factory employment figures for 2.6 million workers in 1970 out of which 0.36 million were women.¹⁶ Total factory employment according to labour statistics was 4.26 millions in 1971 of which 0.39 million were women. Thus, employment data about 5.1 million women workers in 'other-than-household' industry and in mining and quarrying are not available in the report of the committee, or the Labour Ministry's publications.

Decline in women's employment is however a uniform feature in any set of data. Although the general trend of stagnation and decline for all, men and women, is the picture that emerges, women's position has become much worse. This the committee has failed to take notice of. Its observation that "total employment in mines has increased from 5.49 lakhs to 6.30 lakhs"¹⁶ is true for 1951-1971 but during 1961-1971 employment in each of the mining industries declined and total employment fell from 6.7 lakhs to 6.3 lakhs. Equally, in the case of factory employment the

average annual growth rate of employment was about 2.3 per cent during 1961 and 1971, but it came down to about 1 per cent during 1966 and 1971.

Here too, the question of economic participation is a matter of property relations. Technological changes and resultant increase in workers' productivity can lead to real employment growth and increasingly favourable income distribution for the worker only in an economy free from the profit-maximization motive, and therefore, after the socialization of the means of production. Indian data about changing organic composition of capital are thoroughly inadequate. Data tabulated by the Indian School of Social Sciences in 1971, on the basis of CMI-ASI figures, indicate clearly the high rate of increase in workers' productivity in large-scale industry. In many industries, particularly in the heavy and basic, the changing organic composition of capital has very adversely affected employment opportunities. This is an essential feature of superimposed predominance of monopoly capital. The intensifying division of labour in such industries has reduced the demand for unskilled labour further. In many cases, in-service skills acquired by workers earlier became redundant.

Factories and Services

Women obviously are the worst victims particularly because of their more restricted access to skill-training. The committee's own data about the extremely limited proportion of skilled women workers in seven industries and complete absence of skilled women labour in several other industries, and the occupational wage survey reports confirm this. The committee has cited the second occupational wage survey report. A comparison with the 1956 report on occupational patterns in manufacturing industries would have revealed the trend over time more clearly¹⁷. The conclusion of the committee, however, is very clear. It has rightly characterized the "relative degree of capital intensity and the choice of technology" as the "single most important factor"¹⁸ behind decline in factory employment of women. A clearer institutional approach could have led the committee to analyze how such 'structural' changes arise out of the character of ownership of capital or the means to measure the actual productivity of women workers, in spite of their relative lack of skill. The bluff that women workers are less productive could be more effectively called only if some sample comparative productivity analysis were presented.

It is this absence of institutional approach which has prompted the committee to call such effects of "more sophisticated technology in industry on the employment of women" a 'global trend'. The committee's globe does not include the socialist countries where the effect has been exactly opposite. Instead of reducing employment opportunities, improved technology has led to full employment of men and women and to employment of a substantial proportion of women as technicians, engineers and scientists.

There are, of course, welcome exceptions in the report. The absolute increase in women's employment in the services sector has been analyzed by the committee in its proper perspective:

In an economy like ours, where an unusually high proportion of total capital is invested in trade and commerce, or where because of *social and political considerations*, allocation of resources for defence, maintenance of law and order, and certain social services like education and health, the tertiary sector is somewhat bigger in volume... As compared to this, the actual production of goods has not increased at the same pace... The increasing financial crisis has already imposed severe constraints on public resources... The major impact of these demands is bound to be on these sectors where we have noticed a concentration of larger proportion of women's employment viz., education, health, and other social services... We may, therefore, anticipate a slowing down if not an actual reduction in the opportunities for women's employment in the services and professions.¹⁹

Not Merely A Legal Question

Obviously the problem is not just a legal one, nor can it be tackled at the legal level only. Law-making and implementation of law are matters of vested interest and power. The analysis and description of legal inequalities of women, laws protecting various forms of social oppression of women, or those relating to property and employment, are fairly informative. The recommendations about reform of existing laws for uniform civil code, for equality in matters of property rights, prohibition of dowry and child marriage, are most welcome but, as the committee itself has experienced, implementation of a law is not an automatic corollary of legislation. Legal equality and status require the necessary material foundation for implementation. The violation of labour laws is not unknown to the committee. Nor is unknown the factory owner's or the mine owner's utter contempt for laws requiring establishment of creches or provision of maternity benefits. These laws are implemented only when organized trade unions can assert their legal rights. There too it is a question of power.

Political power and economic power are intertwined. Non-economic factors do play a role, no doubt. That less women than men cast their votes is due both to economic inequality and social attitudes and values. The committee's observation, that most women candidates in Assembly and Parliament elections belong to higher income groups and are better educated, essentially reflects the bias of some political parties borne out more particularly in the note of dissent by two members of the committee, referring to women legislators largely coming from 'royal' or big landlord families.²⁰

The right to vote is only a legal right. But to exercise the right is itself a task, as experience of the last few years has proved that even this instrument of formal democracy cannot be used at the discretion of the

voter. The complaint that political parties do not pay equal attention to women indicates a weakness of the democratic movement including the women's movement. But political status or real political participation does not mean just going to the booth and casting the ballot paper. Basically, it is the question of democratic struggle for political power, inseparably linked up with the struggle for political power. Formal or legal aspects need not be underestimated. Nor should the legal instruments for protection of women's rights or all-round equality between men and women be undermined. The recommendations of the committee are by and large useful for mobilizing democratic opinion.

Prostitution can be abolished only when poverty and early widowhood is eradicated. Equal economic status of men and women may not, by itself, abolish the dowry system, but that is a necessary precondition. No amount of labour welfare legislation can ensure creches for all children or maternity benefits for all mothers, so long as profit maximization governs production and distribution. Compulsory primary education or universal 'functional' literacy of women cannot be achieved as long as poverty and child labour exist. Only time can tell what such recent legislations as those regarding bonded labour and equal wages for women will achieve.

Be it the "avarice of the small-property owner"^{2 1} or the "yoke of capital"^{2 1}, private property will make its presence felt everywhere and no less in man-woman relationship. The 'Guru' or the 'Baba' with all his magic and miracles will co-exist with the urban affluence of refrigerator and television. Both commercialization and semi-abnegation of sex will vitiate man-woman relationship as long as private property rules and represses the full development of man as a social being and as an individual.

Women's emancipation, as Fourier had seen, reflects the general level of emancipation of the society. At the present stage, the primary need for such emancipation is a revolutionary transformation of agrarian relations as 214 million women live in rural India, where literacy rates are the lowest and more than 80 per cent of women are employed in agriculture. Present agrarian relations and forms of exploitation in agriculture constitute the greatest obstacle to real economic development and economic emancipation. Such a transformation calls for a powerful women's movement as part of an equally strong democratic movement. The Committee on the Status of Women has, though not unambiguously, recommended both land reform and the organized power of women.

¹ *Towards Equality*, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, December 1974, pp 480.

² *Census of India 1971*, quoted in *Towards Equality*, *op. cit.*, p 31.

³ *Towards Equality*, *op. cit.*, p 37.

⁴ *Pocket Book of Population Statistics*, Census Centenary, 1972.

⁵ *Women in Industry*, Ministry of Labour, p 13, and *Census of India 1971*, Series I paper 3, 1972.

- ⁶ *Towards Equality, op cit.*, p 163.
- ⁷ *Pocket Book of Population Statistics, op. cit.*
- ⁸ *Towards Equality, op. cit.*, pp 149-50.
- ⁹ R K Lahiri, "Inter-state and Seasonal Variations in Women Agricultural Labourers' Work-participation", Paper Submitted at the Seminar for Optimum Utilization of Women Power for Development, New Delhi, November 1975.
- ¹⁰ *Census of India, 1971, Series I, paper 3, 1972.*
- ¹¹ NSS 25th Round, Quoted in Narora (Congress) Background Paper No. 3.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Calculated on the basis of Appendix IX of Report of the Committee on Unemployment, 1970.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 58-59; figures of 17th, 19th, and 21st Rounds are for 5-9 and 10-14 age groups and those of 15th round are for 5-11 and 12-14 age groups.
- ¹⁵ *Women in Industry*, Appendix III.
- ¹⁶ *Towards Equality, op. cit.*, p 186.
- ¹⁷ *Occupational Pattern in Manufacturing Industries*, Planning Commission, p 27.
- ¹⁸ *Towards Equality, op. cit.*, p 199.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 215.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p 356.
- ²¹ V I Lenin, "Soviet Power and Status of Women", *Collected Works*, Vol 30.

SOPHIE M THARAKAN

MICHAEL THARAKAN

Status of Women in India: A Historical Perspective

A STUDY of the status of women in any society must examine the social organization of that society, which in turn is based on primary economic relations. "The ways men live their common lives affect mightily the ways they understand the meaning of that life."¹ A comprehensive understanding of the true nature of women's status in society can be obtained only when we study the role they play in the productive process and the control they exercise over the means of production.

Such an approach to the problem necessarily starts with the nature of man-woman relationship in the early history of mankind. The division of labour based on the sexes and the contradictory forces that it unleashed later, are fundamental in this respect. As Marx observed: "The modern family contains in embryo not only slavery (servitus) but serfdom also, since from the very beginning it is connected with agricultural services. It contains within itself, in miniature, all the contradictions which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state."²

This article attempts to view the evolution of the status of women in India within a framework of analysis based on the concept that upward or downward changes of status occur in relation to changes in the primary economic and social structure of society. Primitive society is seen as one in which women enjoyed a relatively high status. Substantial changes

took place with the advent and consolidation of private property and allied institutions. The rest of human history through feudalism and capitalism to socialism revolves around the primary incapacitation of women brought about by the rise of commodity production and property ownership. Changes in women's status do occur during this long span but within the confines of a world view and institutional structure based on private property.

Down the Ages

An attempt is made here to gauge the degree and level of women's status at different stages of social evolution. This model is worked out on the premise of a historical continuum divided into a simple three-tier chronological structure. The three periods are named early, medieval and modern: broad and relative terms in the sweep and range of time.

The early period is one in which the tribe owns property in common and social relationships have largely kinship overtones. At this stage women play a crucial role in society as the mother, the only identifiable parent in a group—polyandric or pairing—system of marriage. There is a direct division of labour between man and woman. The role which women play in the realm of the household is on par with that which the man plays outside it. In this stage of primitive agriculture or cattle breeding, until the advent of the plough, women participate effectively in the work in the field as well. These factors assure for women a position of importance and respect in society. It is in this context that Engels pointed out that, peoples whose womenfolk have to work much harder than the Europeans consider proper, often have far more real respect for women than the Europeans have for theirs.⁸

The medieval period covers the growth and consolidation of private property and marks the growing control of men over the means of production. The status of women is adversely affected by the growth of slavery and the invention of the plough and field agriculture. The availability of slave labour and the increased potential of field agriculture work to the advantage of man, occurring as these developments do, in his realm. Through the control over the surplus thus created man becomes the master. The importance of woman's domestic activities lessens. This unequal relationship continues through both feudal and bourgeois stages of history. The notable difference between the two stages is in the earlier exclusion and later participation of women in the production process without changing the basic exploitative nature of man-woman relationship.

The third stage opens up possibilities of a society in which socialization of the means of production eliminates the economic justification of strict monogamy and inequality of the sexes. Here the equality of opportunities guaranteed by the non-exploitative premises of the system makes the way clear for genuine personal relationships emerging and sustaining between men and women. Although hypothetical for India, this historical

survey should lead to an assessment of women's emancipation in such a society.

Vedic Age: Education to Marriage

Aryans enter Indian history as nomadic tribes with exceptional mobility given by the horse and the charriot. Their main source of food and mark of wealth was cattle. There is enough evidence particularly in the references to *Gotra*, literally meaning cow-pen but implying an exogamous clan unit to indicate that the cattle wealth was held in common.⁴

At this stage, the chronological limits of which can be laid roughly between 2000 BC and 700 BC, the Aryans had already developed a patriarchal family system with certain amount of male dominance. The overwhelming number of male gods in the early Aryan pantheon indicates such an order of precedence.

The emergence of patriarchal family and male dominance should indicate at least a rudimentary form of family or private property as against the general rule of tribal property-holding. Nevertheless it cannot be overlooked that private and commodity production could not have developed very much. Master-slave relationship in its classical form is absent.

If private property and commodity production have not developed to the extent of creating objective conditions for greater control of the surplus by either of the sexes, then it should warrant a state of simple division of labour between the sexes with bilateral functions having equal importance. Here the division of labour could have been between women in charge of domestic responsibilities and men engaged in hunting and food gathering.

Such a state of affairs would have guaranteed plenty of freedom and respect for the woman. She has not yet lost her crucial role in the production process. Neither has she lost out to man completely in the matter of control of tools and means of production. The simple division of labour between sexes implies that both groups own their own tools of production: women in domestic production and men in hunting.

The position of women in early Vedic age was fairly satisfactory. Child marriage and *sati* came much later and co-education of boys and girls (going through *Upanayana* and *Bramacharya*) was the rule. Women could perform sacrifices independently and they were not regarded as impediments in rituals. The concept of ideal marriage in Vedic period was that of a religious sacrament which made the couple joint owners of the household.⁵ Along with prayers for a son are found those for the gift of a beautiful and intelligent daughter. Girls' education passes through the stages of *Upanayana* and *Brahmacharya* leading to the marital state. Among the scholars of the period are ladies such as Lopamudra, Vishvavara, Sikata Nivavari and Gosha. *Sarvanukramnika* lists as many as twenty women among the "seers" or authors of the *Rig Veda*⁶ showing that possibilities

were open to women to attain formal education and scholastic training.

Upanayana and Bhramacharya for girls meant that their normal marriage age should have been seventeen or eighteen. Marriage was well established as a custom in the Vedic age. Down to about 500BC, although marriage was regarded as highly desirable for both man and woman, there was no social pressure for it to be performed at all costs⁷. Among the various forms of marriage recognized by the *Smritis* the *Asura Vivaha* enjoined the bridegroom to pay a suitable bride-price. By giving a daughter in marriage the parents sustained a loss of productive labour in the family. The husband paid the bride-price in compensation.

In addition, there was the system of *Gandharva Vivaha* in which men and women chose life partners of their own accord. It reveals a fairly high level of freedom and equality between the sexes. In the earlier period of the Aryan incursion into India the economic preconditions for women's status in society, which evidently was carried over from an earlier form of tribal organization, presumably existed. However, this golden age entered a phase of disintegration and decline.

Added Weight of Caste System

The great decline in the status of women, corresponding to the consolidation of private property and commodity production, seems to have occurred round about 1000 BC. Copper had been found and from then on till the rise of Magadha stretched the period of the epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, when Aryan expansion took place east and south of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Burning of forests and use of iron implements extended the scope of agricultural activity. The plough must have come into vogue by this time.

The consequences of these developments were far-reaching for women. The shift from the hoe to the plough eliminated their significance as productive participants in economic activity. The natural division of labour between man and woman became advantageous for the male as it was in his sphere that significant developments took place: he became the owner not only of the plough, but of the field or the farm, and the surplus of wealth produced. Women could, from now onwards, only share the wealth with man without really having any control over it.

Around this period Aryans had established their suzerainty over the various non-Aryan tribes in the Gangetic plain. Incorporation of the *dasyus* into the emerging *varna* or caste system as inferiors in effect created a master-slave relationship. Availability of the labour of the subject castes made commodity production and agriculture more efficient. Also, any benefit that women could have derived from the increased employment opportunities from the switch-over to the plough was denied to them by the advent of the lower caste. In addition, the polygamic tendencies of the Aryan male who started bringing into the household *dasyu* women as female slaves, concubines or sometimes even as wives caused further decline in the status of Aryan women even in the household where she once

reigned supreme.

These changes are reflected in the general attitude towards women. Granting the slight liberalization promoted by the Buddhist tradition it cannot be denied that throughout this period there was a consistent tightening of the restrictions on women.

Women's education received a setback. Age of matrimony remaining at seventeen or eighteen till about 300 BC, there was still some scope for girl's education. The Buddhist monastic orders started admitting women who were given substantial education. Yet simultaneously we see the growing advocacy for reduction of the age of marriage which eventually ended possibilities for girls' education.

By the epic period the demand for earlier marriage gathered strength. While the writers of the *Dharmasutras* who flourished from 400 BC to AD 100 began to advise that marriages of girls should not be delayed long after puberty⁸, around the second century AD, giving girls off in marriage even before puberty seems to have become common practice. Yajñavalkya (around AD 200) insisted that girls should be married before the age of puberty: otherwise their guardians were guilty every month of destruction of an embryo⁹.

Thus Spoke Manu

This is the period in which the concepts of female chastity and strict monogamous marriage took deep roots in the Hindu mind. The growth of monogamous families with insistence on female chastity indicated the direct influence of economic developments in favour of male domination in that period. Important to note is that while women were threatened with dire consequences for adultery by the lawmakers, they were not so strict with men. As Percival Spear points out, while monogamy was generally practised there were conspicuous exceptions in the case of Brahmins, Rajas and higher nobles.¹⁰ The general observation by Engels in his *Origin of Family* that monogamous marriage means monogamy only for woman and not for man who still practises practically polygamy, seems to be applicable to India.¹¹

The decline in women's education, practice of pre-puberty marriage and a whole lot of other institutional and conceptual influences of the period cumulatively established the supremacy of the male over the female and pushed Indian women into dependency and subjugation. The crowning point of this great decline is the Law of Manu which clearly states: "In childhood a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent".¹² According to the code of Manu a woman's business is to tend her husband and to worship him as god.¹³

The decline in the status and rôle of the woman is well illustrated by the plight of the widow, a problem which is particularly significant as it extends our discussion directly into future developments in history. There is no insistence on the custom of sati in early writings. Neither

the Vedas nor the Buddhist traditions dictated the widow's self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband. Megasthenes and Kautilya or for that matter Manu and Yajñavalkya made no reference to sati in their writings. There is the exceptional case of the wife of the Hindu general Keteus, (who in 316 BC died fighting Antigonos) who practised sati.¹⁴ On the whole there are enough reasons to believe that the practice was not common in ancient India.

Widows' Ordeal

By around the fifth century AD, *Smṛiti* writers of the period start discussing sati. There are the instances of the widow of Goparaja and the mother of King Harsha entering sati in 510 and 606 respectively. By the beginning of the eighth century, texts like *Parasarasmr̥iti* start actively advocating the practice as a means of salvation for widows. From then on we have evidence that sati became common practice in various parts of India and by 1300 in Rajaputana more than elsewhere. As late as 1815-28 the British Indian government statistics show as high an incidence as 5000 sati deaths in Calcutta division and 1165 in Benares division. Evidence from sources such as the sati stones of Saugar district indicates that women from different walks of life committed sati.¹⁵

In a period roughly corresponding to that in which sati became prevalent, restrictions came into force on *Niyoga* (dead man's brother or next of kin marrying his widow) and on widow remarriage. From around AD 1000 total prohibition of widow remarriage seems to have become quite widespread. Decline in the rights and freedom of widows, fall in educational levels of women as well as greater prevalence of child marriage indicate a substantial reduction in women's status.

Throughout the emergence and consolidation of feudalism, women were more and more subjugated and exploited. Though a semblance of ritual edification of women seems to have survived as an undercurrent in the medieval period, all historical evidence points to women being more and more excluded from meaningful participation in social and economic life.

The Muslim invasions from the eleventh century AD onwards did not help in the alleviation of women's condition. The various interpretations of Koranic instructions corresponded to the prevailing norm of the woman's role in the society to which the Muslims came. Women were denied any place in religious organizations and legal affairs. Neither did they enjoy effective property inheritance rights. The Muslim period saw the popularization of the *durkha* (*purdha*) and seclusion of women, polygamy and unilateral right of divorce for men.¹⁶

This was the general picture of the Indian women's status at the early stages of the British rule in India. It was very late in the day when some changes became noticeable. Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, Indian public opinion and British liberal reformism were both in favour of putting an end to at least some of the obviously unjust traditions.

and practices. One of the most significant steps in this direction was the regulation by William Bentick in 1829, declaring sati illegal in British India. Though there was stiff resistance to this measure from orthodox Hindu sections it was gradually adopted in the territories ruled by the Indian princes.

Reform Movement

Indian reformers of the period like Mahadev Govind Ranade and Ram Mohan Roy strongly advocated the spread of women's education. The British government's response was also favourable. Mary Frances Billington pointed out, while making detailed observations on women's education in British India, that "inspite of the weighty obstacles against which it has had to contend, the educational movement is undoubtedly making way among the (female) sex."¹⁷ The inauguration of the Indian national Social Conference in 1887 was another significant step in the fight for women's rights.¹⁸ A campaign against early marriages also gathered strength. As a result, by 1929 legislation was passed fixing 14 as the minimum age for marriage of girls.

Significant advances were made in women's proprietary and inheritance rights under British rule. But it was not until 1937 that the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act was passed for a widow to get her right of inheriting a life estate from her husband. We cannot overlook in this connection that even in the medieval period there were certain reformist streaks in favour of a widow exercising limited rights over her deceased husband's property. With the rise of Brahminical priesthood at least one section from among them were in favour of widows having right to dedicate her husband's property to temples. This could have been an attempt to pre-empt the automatic attachment of such property to royal holdings and to divert it to the temples which serve the interests of the Brahmin priests. In Bengal widows' inheritance rights had been recognized even before 1937.¹⁹ This is not to deny that British Indian legislation helped forward the cause of women's proprietary rights. It was the British rulers who legalized the right of a brotherless daughter to be considered absolute heir to her father's property.

The nineteenth-century reform movement for women's rights evoked favourable responses from the British government. These developments are to be seen in the context of important economic changes taking place in India at the time. A nascent national bourgeois class and an English-educated professional group emerged in Indian society. English education, introduced with the objective of training up a group of Indians capable of running the administrative machinery at the middle and lower levels, started spreading in the urban centres. Simultaneous to this development was the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie. With the introduction of railways it became possible to economically extract the coal and iron-ore deposits of the Bihar-Bengal belt. By 1880 production of one million tons coal was registered. By 1930 steel began to be produced by the Indian

industrialist Jamshedji Tata in Bihar. The cotton textile industry organized under the modern factory system developed at such a pace as to attain fourth place for India among world manufacturers by 1914.²⁰ By 1838 a jute industry and by 1850, tea plantations also started developing in the country.

Nationalist Fall-out

The rising professional group and the Indian bourgeoisie exerted their influence strongly in favour of women's rights. Greater participation by women in the production process is conducive to the factory system as it needs women as cheap labour. Moreover, the capitalist mode of production has an inherent capacity to break traditional attitudes, kinship ties and other such social mores of the feudal set-up. As Engels points out, "By transforming all things into commodities it (capitalist production) dissolved all ancient traditional relations, and for inherited customs and historical rights it substituted purchase and sale, 'free' contract."²¹ He goes on to explain that closing of contracts presupposes a people who can freely dispose of their persons, action and possessions, and who meet each other on equal terms.²² By accepting marriage as a contract the implication is that the contracting parties are persons of equal rights and status. Such a conceptual development contributes to the liberalization of limitations on women, though it can be done only within the constraints of the objective economic realities of the capitalist system.

The national freedom movement carried on the cause of women's equality from the earlier reformers. Mahatma Gandhi championed the cause of women in very clear terms. The movement threw up a band of brilliant women freedom fighters both in the ranks of the Congress and among the revolutionaries. The powerful streams in favour of women's rights in the freedom struggle converged in the movement for enhanced proprietary and other rights of women through such measures like the Hindu Code Bill in post-independence India. Women's education and employment opportunities have also been extended.²³

Any movement in India for women's equality and liberation has to contend with the basic exploitative nature of man-woman relationship preconditioned by private property and related institutions. It must have a proper understanding of the feudal and bourgeois attitudes to women that predominate our society without failing to take into account the more primitive overtones in women's status that still remain with us as tribal remnants.²⁴

[We wish to acknowledge our gratitude to Sri Narendra Pani, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, discussions with whom greatly helped us in the preparation of this article.]

¹ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, p 1.

² Karl Marx, as quoted in Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, ch II, p 83.

³ Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, ch II, p 83; also see Hilda Scott, "Does Socialism Liberate

- Women?" *Engels and the Rise and Fall of the Family*, ch II.
- ⁴ D D Kosambi, "The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India", *Historical Outline*, ch 4, p 86.
 - ⁵ A S Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, ch XXI, p 338.
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*, ch I, p 10.
 - ⁷ *Ibid.*, ch II, p 53.
 - ⁸ *Ibid.*
 - ⁹ *Ibid.*, ch II, p 56.
 - ¹⁰ Percival Spear, *India*, ch II, p 47.
 - ¹¹ Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, ch II, p 90.
 - ¹² Quoted in *Status of Women in India: A Synopsis of the Report of the National Committee, 1971-74*, ch III, p 13-14.
 - ¹³ Percival Spear, *op. cit.*,²
 - ¹⁴ A S Altekar, *op. cit.*, ch IV, p 122.
 - ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ch IV.
 - ¹⁶ *Status of Women in India*, ch III, p 15.
 - ¹⁷ Mary Frances Billington, *Women in India: A Study of Medieval Period*, ch II, p 23.
 - ¹⁸ Leela Iqbal Gulati, *Opinions of Indian Men and Women about Employment of Married Indian Women*, Postgraduate thesis (unpublished manuscript).
 - ¹⁹ For detailed analysis of women's status in Bengal, see Sankar Sen Gupta, *A Study of Women of Bengal*.
 - ²⁰ Percival Spear, *op. cit.*, ch XXV, p 287.
 - ²¹ Friedrich Engels, *op. cit.*, ch II, 113.
 - ²² *Ibid.*, p 114.
 - ²³ For details, see *Status of Women in India, op. cit.*
 - ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 17, section referring to tribal religion.

WANDANA SONALKAR

Problems of Working Women in Urban Areas

IT WAS against the background of mid-nineteenth century Europe and striking a hopeful note, that Engels wrote: "The emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work, and restricted to housework, which is private."¹ He implied that the capitalist revolution and the spread of modern industry would lay the foundations of a movement for the social emancipation of women, even if it could not be realized except under socialism. Capitalism, while founded on private property, the ownership of the means of production by the few, and production for profit, willy-nilly also brought into existence the proletariat which could build a society in which all these would be abolished. Similarly, by bringing women in large numbers into the class of the proletariat it would destroy, at least for that class, the system of inequality between the sexes which was inherent in bourgeois society.

Since then capitalism has survived many crises and entered the stage of monopoly and imperialism. In the process it has managed to push back women largely into the sphere of housework; and the nuclear family, consisting of the man who 'works', and the woman 'who is only a housewife', and their children, has remained an institution of great convenience to the ruling classes in capitalist countries. The two go

together. On the one hand, employment of female labour is restricted to the most monotonous tasks, particularly where fine work and delicate handling is involved—the electronics industry, dressmaking, canning, and so on. Women are rarely employed in supervisory capacities, even in these industries. Women are also employed as nurses, teachers, typists and secretaries, that is, in jobs where they carry out the jobs of looking after children and serving men. Hence the preservation of the bourgeois family with its inherent inequality between husband and wife and the perpetuation of ideas like “Women’s place is in the home.” Housework has thus a vital role under capitalism:

A social formation must reproduce continually the conditions of its own production. This means concretely that three different reproductions must take place: (a) in the means of production (b) in the forces of production (labour power) and (c) in the relation of production...Within capitalist relations, domestic labour is integral to the second and third of these reproductions.²

Jobs for the Girls

In the proletarian family, it is the husband who engages in social production, and brings home the wage that is just sufficient to feed and clothe him, his wife and his children. The job of transforming the wage into consumable substances, of returning the fed, washed, rested and sexually satisfied worker to the factory everyday, and of bringing up the children who will form the next generation of workers, is carried out by the housewife. Capitalism propagates the idea that this is indeed the ‘natural’ function of the woman and makes sure that the opportunities made available to work for a wage on her own are restricted in number and, as far as possible, to those jobs which are a socialized version of her domestic function. Thus, instead of bringing increasing numbers of women into social production, modern capitalism has institutionalized the subjugation of woman in its own way, and defined her work, even outside the domestic sphere, by low status and dependence on men. And so also the woman, unexposed to the contradictions between classes in production is a conservative force, helping ‘to reproduce the relations of production’, that is, to maintain the status quo.

In the early part of British rule in India, they employed thousands of Indian women in mines, plantations, textile mills, and construction work. Through the destruction of domestic handicrafts the British started the process of increasing pressure on agricultural land, and although the conditions in these new areas of employment were miserable, large numbers of women came to the plantations, mines and cities. But the job opportunities for women remained meagre in the cities; so men came alone to seek jobs, and prostitution has been a ubiquitous feature of urban areas ever since. The main problem for women in Indian cities is still the lack of jobs. The following list of occupations was quoted of female earners, “in order of importance” in 1961²: for Bombay, textile workers,

TABLE I

WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Category of Activity	Female workers per 100 male workers	
	1961	1971
Cultivators	38.88	9.25
Agricultural labourers	85.62	41.60
Livestock	20.06	14.41
Mining and quarrying	—	11.96
Industry :		
a) Household	61.33	26.87
b) Other than household	7.70	6.14
Construction	11.59	8.89
Trade and commerce	6.78	4.89
Transport etc.	2.35	2.46
Other services	20.53	18.70

indoor domestic servants, clerks and typists, school teachers, beedi workers sweepers, hawkers and street vendors, unskilled manufacturing workers, packers, millhands, nurses, tailors and cutters: for Calcutta, domestic servants and cooks, prostitutes, teachers, owners of retail shops, nurses, and midwives, sweepers, clerks and assistants, washerwomen, tailors telephone operators, typists and stenographers, shop assistants, hawkers. In Bombay, women constituted 10 per cent of all earners and in Calcutta 5 per cent. The predominance of petty service occupations is remarkable. Moreover, technological innovations are taking their toll, so that opportunities for employment in even unskilled manufacturing work are actually shrinking in number. This is true of jobs for men as well, but the ratio of female to male workers in various activities has declined sharply between 1961 and 1971. All-India figures in the table relate to urban areas only.³

Traditional Fields of Employment

Household industry—activities like hand loom weaving, oil pressing, beedi making and tobacco processing and agarbatti making, has a traditionally employed female labour. Where these processes are becoming mechanized, women's employment is hit hard, and on the other hand, 'other than house hold' industry has provided few jobs to women in the past and their number is not growing. Female textile workers have been thrown out of jobs in thousands since the early sixties. In Maharashtra, the number of female workers registered under the Factory Act has remained practically constant between 1961 and 1969 (62,587 and 66,581 respectively). Within Maharashtra, moreover, districts like Sholapur and Aurangabad which are centres of the textile industry, showed an actual decline in numbers in this period. In Poona district, despite rapid industrialization

in the urban area, and a virtual doubling of the population in the fifteen years since 1960, the number of female workers in non-household industry in the metropolitan area is well under 3000.

Women Workers in Poona

From figures at the Inspector of Factories' office for the number of employees in concerns employing at least 10 workers in the Poona Metropolitan District, we got an approximate breakdown of the female workers coming under Factory Act legislation, by industry (Table II). Of these, the figure for engineering is misleading as it is the total of very small numbers of female employees in clerical and secretarial posts in a large number of engineering concerns. Although engineering is the major industry in Poona, it has provided hardly any jobs for women. Chemicals and pharmaceuticals and medical equipment production account for about 500 jobs altogether. The textile industry was never very important here, and numbers are falling. The figure of 150 for stone-crushing is an underestimate; this type of work is usually done on contract, and the number of permanent employees on record is not an indicator of the size of the female working population engaged in it. The growth of the city has provided jobs in construction and stone-crushing and quarrying for the nomadic Waddar community in which women work in almost equal numbers with men. It is difficult to find accurate figures for the size of this work force and its employment, but this class of activity probably ranks third in the list of non-domestic female occupations, after beedi making and the manufacture and assembly of electronic components.

TABLE II

WOMEN WORKERS IN POONA

Industry	Approximate number of women employed
Electronics	950
Chemicals & pharmaceuticals	350
Engineering	250
Textiles	200
Food-processing	150
Paper and packaging	100
Stone-crushing	150
Glass and glass products	200
Presses	50

Domestic servants form another large class of women workers, for the size of which we could not find an accurate recent estimate. The 1961 Census mentions 12,794 as the total number of domestic servants in Poona district, "or one in every 195 persons". Female domestic servants are certainly the majority and we can safely arrive at a minimum estimate of four to five thousand for the Poona city area. The 1971 Census gives a

population of 10 lakhs for Poona city, with a sex ratio of 861 females to each 1000 males; thus the population of women is about 465,000. The total figure for female workers for the urban areas of Poona district is 45,924. Even allowing for the difference in the definition of 'workers' in the 1961 and 1971 censuses—the latter is more restrictive—we find that the proportion of female workers to total female population has not changed much since 1961, when it was 9.27 per cent, even though in these ten years a rapid industrialization of Poona city had taken place.

Approximate figures for the ratio of female workers to total workers in various activities for urban areas of Poona district are as follows.

TABLE III
MAN-WOMAN RATIOS IN WORK FORCE

Category of Activity	Female workers per 100 male workers
Cultivators	14
Agricultural labourers	70
Livestock etc.	11
Mining and quarrying	48
Manufacturing	
a) household	30
b) other than household	6
Construction	14
Trade and commerce	8
Transport	8
Other services	21

These ratios differ substantially from the all-India figures only in the case of mining and quarrying and construction, where the traditional division of labour in the Waddar community is marked by high work-participation by women.

Beedi Workers

Case studies of women in some of the major areas of activity in Poona were conducted in September 1975 to examine the general nature of their conditions of work, special problems, how they combine wage-work with domestic responsibilities, and so forth. Women of a strictly working-class background, that is, whose men are engaged in manual labour, work in the main at the making of beedi, papad and agarbatti and as sweepers, domestic servants, construction and quarry workers. The factory jobs in electronics, packaging, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and glass products are relatively privileged, and the majority of women here belong to the families of white-collar workers.

Women beedi workers are a notoriously exploited section. Although the Factory Act has been made applicable to them, and norms of payment and hours of work have been enforced in law, the prevalent system of

out-work and piece-wages is highly exploitative. One trade union activist estimates a work force of about 3300, of whom only about 700 are in unions. The women are allotted bundles of dried leaves and tobacco, and paid for every thousand beedis completed. Each thousand involves about 12 hours of work; the payment per thousand was Rs 1.50 thirty years ago and is now Rs 5. This would come to a monthly income of Rs 150 if they obtained work daily, but there is no guarantee of this; they have to take the work as it comes, and their actual earnings are on the average not more than Rs 70 or 80. The work has two stages, cutting the leaves to a rectangular shape, and rolling and tying the beedis. The first part is always done at home; the women bring the cut leaves to the factory in some cases and in others complete the rolling at home. Working at home is usually preferred, as the children's help can be obtained, and so the productivity of the home-worker is at least one-and-a-half times that of the factory worker. The most frequent complaint of these women is about the quality of the leaves they are supplied with. If large parts of the allotted material are unusable, they have to replace it at their own cost. Sometimes the employers themselves sell leaves for replacement at the time of supplying and collection work. The proportion of unusable leaves can be as high as 20 or 30 per cent. Also, the employers can reject at their discretion any number of the completed beedis as substandard, and this is a common means of victimizing employees who complain or take leadership in strikes.

The beedi workers in Poona are mainly of the Padmashali community, originally from Andhra. There are also a considerable number of Muslim women doing this work. The men of the Padmashali community are also traditionally in the tobacco industry, but the rate of male unemployment is very high. Drinking is widespread among the men, and the economic burden falls on the women. Child labour is also used, and in fact learning to roll beedis is an important part of the training of girls, an essential qualification for marriage. Bigamy is not uncommon, with the man taking two wives to double his income. The availability of work for the women has decreased. A woman who has been a beedi maker for twenty years, said: "When I first started, anyone who wanted work could get it. Now my daughter and daughter-in-law cannot get any."

Construction Sites

Among the Waddars, also emigrés from Andhra, the women's social position is a little better. This is a nomadic community, which in Poona lives mainly in the four or five areas where there are stone quarries and moves wherever work is available. There is a traditional division of labour between men and women in stone digging, crushing, and construction; the women's work is physically heavy. Workers are not unionized, but they work in groups for contractors, some of whom are themselves Waddars. Employment is by contract and payment by the lorry filled with stone for quarry workers, or for completed tasks like concreting or

digging foundations for construction workers. The earnings of women workers are about Rs 100 a month, when work is available and that of men about Rs 150 to 200.

The women start working at the age of 16 or 17, usually helping their husbands. "The men cannot fill the lorries without our help", said a quarry worker. They stop working in the last six weeks of pregnancy, and resume work soon after delivery, taking the infant to the work site, in a cloth slung over the shoulder. Work is irregular, the rainy season being the worst for both quarry and construction workers. Drinking among the men is a common problem, but the women seem ready to defend themselves physically from husbands who beat them. Women continue to work when they get older. They are dependent on their men for obtaining work, as we learnt from a widow who told us that women like her were making a demand that some special provision should be made for them as they had difficulty in getting employment. Indebtedness is common among these people, the moneylenders being mostly Waddars themselves. The Waddar women rarely think of looking for alternatives to their traditional form of employment.

Sweepers and Domestic

The Poona Municipal Corporation employs a number of women sweepers, mainly from the Mahar or other Dalit sections. There are about 700 permanent employees who get about Rs 350 per month, which is equal to the men's income, the result of union action. Also on the Corporation's registers are about 1500 casual employees, who have to come to one of the Municipality's many centres all over the city, in the hope of getting work. Their daily trips result in employment for barely 4 to 5 days of work for each woman; though they are paid at the same rate as the permanent employees, this brings them barely Rs 40 or 50 a month. These women often have to travel long distances on the off chance of getting work. There are also some semi-permanent workers who get about 15 days of work each month. One such woman was providing for herself, a 20-year-old unemployed son, and four children, one of whom is mentally retarded, on Rs 120 a month.

In all these occupations the women have to bring their very young children to the workplace with them. The beedi factories have no facilities for looking after children. Sweepers and building labourers who work outdoors, have no sheltered place to keep infants. Older children are looked after by relatives where possible; in some cases 5- or 6-year-old children are left at home alone.

The domestic servants are the largest section of employed women of the working class, who are of Maharashtrian origin, mainly Marathas. The nature of work being 'private', and scattered in location, it is a difficult section to organize. Attempts to do so in the past have failed. These women work seven days a week, usually washing clothes and pots and pans and cleaning houses, in several homes every day. The income

from 2 hours of work in each of 4 houses—altogether 8 hours—is about Rs 40 to 50 per month. Earnings vary a little according to the residential area in which work is done. The relationship between employer and employee is of the 'feudal' type: the nature of the service is personal, payment is often partly in the form of food or the occasional gift of cast-off clothing; when in need of money the servant will usually approach her employer first, and such loans tie a further bond between them. The perpetuation of this form of employment is a clear result of the economic and political non-development of society.

Blue Blending with White

Factory employment remains limited in size and is largely the prerogative of the lower middle class. In the electronics industry, there are a handful of large concerns which employ more than 50 women each. In these, pay and work conditions are relatively good. Monthly wages of operators working on conveyor belts start from Rs 475. Increments are given partly on seniority and partly on efficiency criteria. Some girls in Philips said, however, that their union had had to fight for the enforcement of statutory increments. In three Philips' factories in Poona, creche facilities are provided free and are extensively used by employees. Most of the employees here are girls and women from relatively comfortable backgrounds, many of them educated upto matric and beyond, and seeing their earnings as 'pocket-money' enabling them to buy some luxuries for themselves and their homes. Even so, there has been large-scale retrenchment of 100 of the 500 or so workers by Philips for instance, since 1972. At least a third of the 1000 or more women employed in the electronics industry, however, work in small workshops which do contract work for larger firms. The pay here is often as low as Rs 50 or 60 a month. The women in these workshops work out of financial necessity, but are usually of lower middle-class backgrounds, and educated upto matric or a little less. The electronics workshops are situated in the areas of Bhosari, Hadapsar and Kothrud, which, besides being far from the city, do not fall on the route of the local train service along the Bombay-Poona road upto Lonavla. Bus fares are expensive, and bus journeys time-consuming.

Factory employees in other industries usually earn no more than Rs 200 monthly. Creche facilities are rarely provided and women have often to give up work when their children are young. Consequently, unmarried women, widows, and those women who have been deserted by their husbands are preferred by the employers. Women's participation in unions does not fall far behind that of their male colleagues, but active participation is rare.

Nurses, telephone operators and clerks in government and other institutions, and teachers in primary and secondary schools go to make up the class of women white-collar workers. The size of the category 'other services' is about 22,000 for Poona district, according to the 1971 census. Pay is according to fixed scales in government institutions, starting

at Rs 300 per month. Clerks here, and nurses in government hospitals are to a great extent unionized. Employment is on the strength of qualification and through 'contacts'. Nurses in private hospitals are usually drawn from those who for some reason have not obtained the full qualifications. They are heavily exploited through lower pay, overwork in the absence of organized shift systems, and often insulting treatment from patients. The nursing profession in India does not have the social status of a profession. City jobs are limited, but nurses are unwilling to apply for village jobs, giving the lack of personal protection against assaults and ill-treatment as a central reason.

Portrait in Miniature

The picture in Poona is typical of Indian cities: female employment is limited to a few industries, where the potential for growth is not very great. In the traditional areas of manual work, employment of women in 'social production' does not break the boundaries of caste and community. Just as in capitalist countries the traditional division of labour between the sexes is essentially preserved and accommodated within a changed industrial structure, so in Indian cities, the feudal division of labour is virtually undisturbed. Thus we have the beedi worker whose independent earning capacity does not protect her from bigamy by the man; the Waddar widow who is not accommodated for in the division of work; the Mahar woman who is performing the same duty in the city that she was doing in the village. Certainly, the participation in social labour imparts to these women a confidence, a militancy and a freedom from the illusions of female fragility which differentiates them from middle-class women. But ultimately she is socially dependent on her husband, the care of children is wholly her responsibility, and within the home she serves her husband whether or not she also works outside, and, though she may occasionally curse out of fatigue and frustration, the idea that she should demand that he shares these domestic tasks is alien to her. And the situation shows signs of worsening, as the number of opportunities for women to work outside the domestic sphere is hardly growing.

The recent striking fall in the proportion of women in the labour force in various activities is the result of the general economic stagnation and recession. At such times, women are the first to be retrenched in capitalist countries also, for the reasons earlier outlined. In India, where capitalist development itself is an abortive, distorted and dependent process, the problem is exaggerated. A premature mechanization of the 'household industries', which account for a large section of women workers producing by semi-traditional methods, has hit female employment hard. Such mechanization, 'premature' in relation to the present growth needs of the Indian economy, is itself the consequence of the still dominant presence of foreign capital. Thus the influence of advanced capitalist countries today acts both economically and ideologically in a manner detrimental to the progress of women's emancipation in India.

The early impact of western capitalism on Indian society had some progressive features in the form, for instance, of movements against sati and child marriage. But modern capitalism can only show us the image of woman pushed back to the hearth, brought into public life only to be degraded as a commercial object. Modern imperialism strangles the life of our economy, so that the oldest forms of subjugation of women also thrive at the same time.

- ¹ Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Moscow 1968, p 158.
- ² Wally Secombe, "Housework under Capitalism", *New Left Review* 83, January-February 1974.
- ³ D R Gadgil, *Women in the Working Force in India*, 1963.
- ⁴ *Towards Equality*, a Government of India report on the Status of Women in India, December 1974.
- ⁵ *Census of India*, 1971, Poona District Census Handbook.

ALETAMMA GEORGE

Literacy: Doorway to Liberation

IN INDIA the status of women has never been on a par with that in the developed countries. Low levels of living, literacy and inter-spouse communication combined with economic dependence, ignorance and tradition stand in the way of improving it. Of these factors, literacy and education play a predominant role. This article attempts to examine the progress of Indian women in respect of education and educational opportunity.

In the spread of education in India, the contribution of Christian missionaries has been the most outstanding. It was they who originated the idea of imparting instruction to Indian women by establishing exclusive schools in 1819. Their activities ultimately gave rise to an enlightened public opinion and, in spite of opposition from orthodox sections, to increasing realization of the importance of female education. The emphasis on female education by Christian missionaries, Indian reformers as well as women leaders ultimately became the most potent factor in spreading a wave of self-consciousness among the women of India. Almost all the women's organizations voiced the demand for universal, free and compulsory education and facilities of higher and technical education for women.¹ With the attainment of independence, the need for a different orientation became imperative but hardly any effort has been made to change the structure and pattern of education or relate it to the mobilization

of human resources, of which woman power is the major component, in a developing economy. Of course, there have been additions to the old pattern but hardly enough to meet the enormous demands.

Two R's

The ability to read and write is the census criterion for defining a literate person. India's population at the 1971 census was 547.9 million of which 264.0 million were females: for every 100 males there were 93 females. The population recorded a decennial growth percentage of 24.8. The estimated population in 1972 was 558.6 million including 269.1 million females. Of this 558.6 million, 75 million belonged to age group 6-11 years, 40 million to the 11-14 group and 36 million to the 14-17 age range.² It is no easy task for a nation which has emerged from the clutches of foreign rule to eradicate illiteracy within a short period, bearing in mind that at the 1951 census, soon after independence, there were 92 per cent illiterate females. The nation's primary goal of providing universal, compulsory and free primary education can be achieved only through progressive increase in enrolment. The advance towards this aim is seen to be retarded on account of the rapid rise in population.

In table I, we see that the progress of female literacy from 1901 to 1971 has been meagre. The percentage of literate females out of total female population increased from 0.69 in 1901 to 18.72 in 1971. A comparison with male literacy shows that the percentage of literate males

TABLE I

PROGRESS OF LITERACY,

INDIA AND KERALA, 1901—1971

Census year	Percentage literate population to total population		Percentage of literate males to total male population		Percentage of literate females to total female population	
	India	Kerala	India	Kerala	India	Kerala
1901*	5.35	12.85	9.83	22.05	0.69	3.65
1911*	5.92	15.45	10.56	25.82	1.05	5.15
1921*	7.16	21.95	12.21	32.20	1.81	11.84
1931*	9.50	25.58	15.59	37.14	2.93	14.33
1951**	16.67	47.37	24.95	57.15	7.93	37.95
1961	24.02	46.85	34.44	54.97	12.95	38.90
1971	29.46	60.42	39.45	66.62	18.72	54.31

* For undivided India

** Excluding Jammu and Kashmir

SOURCES: 1) *Pocket Book of Population Statistics*, Census Centenary, 1972, Office of the Registrar General, India.

2) *Census of India 1961*, Kerala, Part IA-General Report, Office of the Registrar General, India.

TABLE II
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF INDIAN WOMEN BY AGE GROUP, 1971
(IN MILLIONS)

Educational level	Age — group			Age — group 25 and above			Total		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
a Illiterate	26.09 (76.69)	3.55 (35.89)	29.64 (67.50)	81.68 (91.99)	12.93 (63.38)	94.61 (86.65)	107.77 (87.75)	16.48 (54.41)	124.25 (81.16)
b { Literate (without educa- tional level) Primary and middle level Matriculate and above	2.12 (6.23)	0.73 (7.38)	2.85 (6.49)	2.97 (3.35)	1.71 (8.39)	4.68 (4.28)	5.09 (4.14)	2.44 (8.06)	7.53 (4.92)
	5.11 (15.02)	3.60 (36.40)	8.71 (19.84)	4.06 (4.57)	4.06 (19.90)	8.12 (7.44)	9.17 (7.47)	7.66 (25.28)	16.83 (10.99)
	0.70 (2.06)	2.01 (20.33)	2.71 (6.17)	0.08 (0.09)	1.70 (8.33)	1.78 (1.63)	0.78 (0.64)	3.71 (12.25)	4.49 (2.93)
	7.93 (23.31)	6.34 (64.11)	14.27 (32.50)	7.11 (8.01)	7.47 (36.62)	14.58 (13.35)	15.04 (12.25)	13.81 (45.59)	28.85 (18.84)
Total literate and illiterate	34.02 (100)	9.89 (100)	43.91 (100)	88.79 (100)	20.40 (100)	109.19 (100)	122.81 (100)	30.29 (100)	153.10 (100)

NOTE: Estimated from one per cent sample data. Figures in brackets are percentages.
SOURCE: *Pocket Book of Population Statistics*.

out of total male population) rose from 9.83 in 1901 to 39.45 in 1971 which is more than double the percentage for women for the same year.

Among the states, Kerala stands foremost in male and female literacy recording 66.62 per cent and 54.31 per cent respectively at the 1971 census.³ In the adjacent states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka the female literacy rates are 26.83 per cent and 20.76 per cent respectively. Excepting Meghalaya, no other state in India has the difference between male and female literacy levels as narrow as for Kerala. In Meghalaya, even though the disparity between male and female literacy is less, the percentages for males and females as per the 1971 census were 32.94 and 23.70 respectively which were far below those of Kerala. The difference, which was 16 per cent in 1961 in Kerala, decreased to 12 in 1971, showing a possibility of smoothing out in the near future. Other states will have to wait a longer time to reach man-woman equality in literacy.⁴

The constitutional directive to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 could not be fulfilled mainly because of the slow progress of girls' education among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In spite of the expansion that has taken place in the formal educational system, the vast majority of Indian women are still illiterate. While the percentage of literate females has increased, so also has the actual number of illiterate females—from 161.9 million in 1950-51 to 215.3 million in 1970-71.⁵

Adult Illiteracy: India and the World

Table II presents the educational level of Indian women in the age groups 15-24, and 25 plus for 1971. The 29.64 million illiterate women in the age group 15-24 constitute 67.5 per cent of this group and 94.61 million illiterates constitute 86.6 per cent of the older (25+) group. Of special significance is the fact that of the small proportion of literate women in these two age groups, the large majority have been to primary and middle schools. Of the total number of adult illiterate females, 86.74 per cent live in rural areas and more than three-fourths (75.8 per cent) of the rural adult illiterate females are in the age group 25 and above.

Considering adult illiteracy on a world basis, of all adults (15 years

TABLE III

WORLD ADULT LITERACY (IN MILLIONS)

Year	Total adults	Literates	Illiterates	Percent illiterate to total adults
1950	1,579	879	700	44.3
1960	1,869	1,134	735	39.3
1970	2,287	1,504	783	34.2

SOURCE: "Literacy and World Population", *Population Bulletin*, Vol 30, No 2, Population Reference Bureau, Washington D.C.

and over) in the world, about one-third (34.2 per cent) were illiterate in 1970. Although the number of illiterate adults increased from 700 million in 1950 to 783 million in 1970, there was a decline in terms of percentage. Table III gives the world adult literacy figures, 1950-1970. The majority of the illiterates live in rural areas and most of them are women.⁶

Considering adult illiteracy in the world by region for the year 1970 as given in table IV, it can be seen that there is a relationship between population growth rate and illiteracy. Africa, with a yearly population growth of 2.6 per cent, had 73.7 per cent of its adult population illiterate in 1970, whereas, with an annual population growth of 2.5 per cent, India had 66.7 per cent adult illiterates at the 1971 census. With 55 per cent of the world's population and an annual growth rate of 2.1 per cent, 46.8 per cent of the adult population in Asia were unable to

TABLE IV
WORLD ADULT LITERACY BY REGION, 1970 (IN MILLIONS)

Region	Total adults	Percent of yearly population growth	Literate rates	Illiterate rates	Percent illiterate
Africa	194	2.6	51.1	143.0	73.7
North America	161	1.2	158.0	2.5	1.5
Latin America	163	2.9	125.0	38.6	23.6
Asia	1237	2.1	658.0	579.0	46.8
Europe and U.S.S.R.	521	0.9	502.0	18.7	3.6
Oceania	13	2.0	11.8	1.4	10.3
India*	318	2.5	105.7	211.7	66.7

* 1971 census

SOURCE: "Literacy and World Population", *Population Bulletin*, Vol 30, No 2.

read and write in 1970. As an exception, even though Latin America recorded a population growth of 2.9 per cent, only 23.6 per cent of its adult population were illiterate. This may be due to the fact that more effective educational measures have been launched in Central and South America than in other regions of the developing world.⁷

In the world adult literacy figures for 1960 and 1970 as given in table V, while the number of illiterate men rose by 8 million between 1960 and 1970, the number of illiterate women rose by 40 million. These also show that worldwide male illiteracy is decreasing at a faster rate.

Effective Literacy

The term 'effective rate of literacy' refers to the rate obtained by excluding children of ages up to 4 from the population. The effective literacy rate for Kerala was 3.65 per cent for females and 22.05 for males in 1901. This rate increased to 62.53 per cent for females and 77.13 per

TABLE V

WORLD MALE AND FEMALE ADULT LITERACY, 1960 AND 1970
(IN MILLIONS)

	1960		1970	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total adults	916	953	1127	1160
Literate adults	609	525	812	692
Illiterate adults*	307	428	315	468
	(33.5)	(44.9)	(28.0)	(40.3)

* Figures in brackets are the corresponding percentages.

SOURCE: "Literacy and World Population", *Population Bulletin*, Vol 30, No 2.

cent for males in 1971. Corresponding rates for 1961 were 45.56 for females and 54.89 for males. During the decade 1961-1971 there has been a substantial progress in literacy rate in Kerala. Forty-seven per cent of school pupils in Kerala during 1971-72 were girls. The percentage of school enrolment increased from 17.5 per cent of the population in 1956-57 to 22.5 per cent in 1971-72. It is claimed that there is a hundred per cent enrolment of pupils in Kerala in the age group 5 to 9. This does not imply that the state has reached absolute effective literacy. It can be achieved only when adult illiteracy is wiped out.⁸ The eradication of mass illiteracy is necessary not only for improving the status of women but also for quickening the tempo of national development in general.

While Kerala in its attempt to remove illiteracy has gone ahead, there are states like Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, and Rajasthan where the percentage of literate females is less than 10. In these states a concerted effort is called for in order to catch up with the rest of the country.

On School Rolls

Table VI gives the all-India statistics of enrolment in schools for the period 1950-51 to 1970-71. While there has been a substantial increase in enrolment in the percentage of girls in the primary stage, the increase in enrolment for the middle school stage and especially for the secondary stage has been far from satisfactory.

The progress in enrolment in schools for 1972 can be seen from table VII. There were 61.4 million pupils including 23.2 million girls in primary schools during 1972. Teachers in primary schools numbered 1.1 million giving a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:56. Of the 40 million pupils in age group 11-14 years, 14.1 million were in middle schools which had 0.67 million teachers, a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:21. In the high and higher secondary schools the number of pupils was 7.1 million and teachers 0.62 million. For the whole of India, there were 83.0 million pupils (36 per

TABLE VI

ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS, BY AGE GROUP, INDIA 1951-71.
(IN PERCENTAGES)

Year	Primary stage			Middle stage			Secondary stage					
	(Classes I to V)			(Classes V to VII)			(Classes VII to X)			(Classes IX to XI)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51	55.0	20.1	37.8	20.8	4.6	13.0	10.9	1.8	6.5	3.3	0.5	1.9
1960-61	74.0	35.1	54.8	35.5	12.5	24.3	20.8	5.4	13.1	8.0	1.6	4.9
1970-71	109.8	68.6	89.7	66.7	33.0	50.7	34.2	12.2	23.4	14.6	3.5	9.2

SOURCE: *Status of Women in India*, Indian Council of Social Science Research, 1974.

TABLE VII

ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS, 1972

Class	Girls	Total
IX and above	1,899,607	7,082,886
VI to VIII	4,292,023	14,077,223
I to V	23,229,845	61,426,032
Pre-primary	204,432	431,047

SOURCE: *Educational Statistics at a Glance*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, New Delhi 1972.

cent girls) and 23.9 million teachers in 1972. In other words, when 69.06 per cent of the boys in the age group 6-17 were attending schools, the percentage of girls' school attendance in the same age group was only 40.20. That is, for every 17 boys there were only 10 girls going to school in 1972.

Table VIII shows the percentage of children attending schools out of the relevant age group in 1972.

TABLE VIII

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, BY AGE GROUP, 1972

Class	Age group	India			Kerala		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
I to V	6-11	99.0	63.7	81.9	126.8	121.9	124.5
VI to VIII	11-14	48.1	21.9	35.3	82.0	73.7	78.0
IX to XI	14-17	29.8	11.3	20.8	32.6	29.7	31.2

SOURCE: *Educational Statistics at a Glance*, 1972.

Higher Education

In recent decades the number of females in India going in for higher education (including technical and professional courses) has been steadily increasing. The enrolment of women in university education during 1950-51 to 1970-71 is given in table IX.

TABLE IX

ENROLMENT OF WOMEN IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (ALL LEVELS)

Faculty	1950-51			1960-61			1970-71		
	Total enrolment (E ₁)	Enrolment of women (W ₁)	* $\frac{W_1}{E_1} \times 100$	Total enrolment (E ₂)	Enrolment of women (W ₂)	* $\frac{W_2}{E_2} \times 100$	Total enrolment (E ₃)	Enrolment of women (W ₃)	* $\frac{W_3}{E_3} \times 100$
Arts	182005	29262	16.1	486228	119687	24.6	1329626	421850	31.7
Science	127168	9046	7.1	302700	31696	10.5	948009	168540	17.8
Commerce	34067	189	0.6	90214	831	0.9	344108	12675	3.7
Education	4135	1339	32.4	19005	6230	32.8	56922	20799	36.5
Engineering, technology	12094	19	0.2	45389	403	0.9	90034	910	1.0
Medicine	15260	2493	16.3	35215	7714	21.9	97601	22296	22.8
Agriculture	4744	8	0.2	27584	124	0.5	43352	169	0.4
Veterinary science	1101	5	0.5	5385	38	0.7	6222	44	0.7
Law	13649	290	2.0	27251	815	3.0	70618	2626	3.7
Others	2522	475	18.8	10893	2917	26.8	14800	5913	40.0
All faculties	396745	43126	10.9	1049864	170455	16.2	3001292	655822	21.9

* $\frac{W}{E} \times 100$ = Percentage enrolment of women to total enrolment.

SOURCE: *Status of Women in India*.

During the last two decades, there has been an increase in the proportion of women in all faculties. Special mention may be made of enrolment in arts and science. Yet the fact remains that even in these faculties, the proportion of women is pitifully low. In professional courses women have enrolled substantially in teaching, medicine and fine arts ('Others' in table) but meagrely in commerce, law, agriculture and engineering. Though in India the facilities for technical and professional education for women are widening, girls have still to be encouraged and motivated to go in.

A comparison with the data for university enrolment for 1947-48 shows that the percentage of females going in for general education courses has increased to 26 in 1972 from 11 in 1947-48. For professional courses, the percentage increased from 5 in 1947-48 to 10 in 1972. Table X gives the

TABLE X
UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT, INDIA 1972

Type of education	Girls	Total	Percentage of girls
General education	660,871	2,530,094	26
Professional education (total)	61,046	633,479	10
Engineering, technology etc	830	84,294	1
Medicine	18,283	87,620	21
Teacher training	21,211	55,710	38
Commerce	20,372	4,03,843	5

SOURCE: *Educational Statistics at a Glance, 1972.*

position in 1972. The number of female students for general education increased 28 times in 1972 from what it was in 1947-48, and 23 times for professional education.

Considering girls' enrolment for each stage of university education as given in table XI, it is evident that the proportion of girls is higher at the postgraduate stage than at the undergraduate. While the proportion of undergraduates increased from 10.8 per cent in 1950-51 to 21.6 per cent in 1970-71 (10.8 per cent) the parallel postgraduate proportion increased from 12.1 per cent in 1950-51 to 25.8 per cent in 1970-71 (13.7 per cent).

If primary education is intended to provide the individual with the basic knowledge which every adult should be conversant with, secondary education aims at the advancement of culture and leadership. Since secondary education is the backbone of any society, the system should be adapted to suit the changing conditions of our life. University education on the other hand is the instrument of transmission of the cultural heritage to the new generations, the creation of new knowledge by research, and

TABLE XI
UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT (ALL FACULTIES)

Year	Undergraduate			Postgraduate			Research			All levels	
	Total enrolment (E ₁)	Enrolment of women (W ₁)	$\frac{W_1}{E_1} \times 100$	Total enrolment (E ₂)	Enrolment of women (W ₂)	$\frac{W_2}{E_2} \times 100$	Total enrolment (E ₃)	Enrolment of women (W ₃)	$\frac{W_3}{E_3} \times 100$	Total enrolment (E)	Enrolment of women (W)
1950-51	375319	40499	10.8	19992	2425	12.1	1434	202	14.1	396745	33126
1960-61	985872	159491	16.2	58909	10170	17.3	5083	794	15.6	1049864	170455
1970-71	2826799	611553	21.6	161182	41516	25.8	13311	2753	20.7	3001292	655822
											21.9

* $\frac{W}{E} \times 100$ = Percentage of enrolment of women to total enrolment.

SOURCE: *Status of Women in India*.

the right kind of leadership. Its purpose is also to strive to promote equality and social justice and to reduce social and cultural differences.

Tasks Ahead

As far as higher education for girls is concerned, our resources are limited and the system is outmoded and practically unsuitable to the changes that are taking place⁹. As a result of the rapid development of science and technology, social and economic changes are overtaking us at a faster rate and consequently the education of women should be organized to help them adjust to these changes. In order to equip women for the changing conditions of life, they must be made aware of the transformation especially in the traditional beliefs and values. We should take appropriate measures to narrow down the existing gap between women's and men's education. To prepare women to adapt themselves to the growing needs of a developing economy we should strive hard, first to remove mass illiteracy, secondly, to provide equality of opportunity to all women for higher education and thirdly to provide them with gainful employment. Mass illiteracy is a gigantic problem to be tackled urgently. It is 28 years since we became independent and to say that 81.28 per cent of women in India are still illiterate is certainly not something to brag about. The high rate of population growth reduces educational opportunities for women, and undereducated women have high fertility rate and perpetuate a situation where population growth outruns the education budgets. It is worth noting in this connection that the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women found a strong inverse relationship between the educational level of the mother and the size of the family¹⁰. A negative association between fertility and educational level has been observed in several studies in India and abroad. The author has shown in another study¹¹ that there exists an inverse relationship between female literacy and birth and death rates. The Mysore Population Study¹² and the National Sample Survey of 1960-61¹³ have also revealed that fertility decreased as the educational level of females increased. This relationship irrefutably points to the fact that while education of women is a prerequisite for improving their status, it also functions as a determining factor in the curtailment of fertility.

Education of females in India has been a neglected area for a long time. The constitutional directive to give free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 could not be fulfilled even 28 years after independence. We have progressed to some extent in our efforts to eradicate illiteracy but in the matter of higher education for women we lag behind. Enrolment figures reveal that the increase of women in general education courses at university level has been substantial while that for professional courses has been deplorably low. The gap in the education of boys and girls is wide and we should take appropriate measures to narrow down the existing gap. It is established that literacy and education play a decisive role in the improvement of women's status and these in turn are

related to fertility. In so far as our population growth goes unchecked, the attempts to improve economic and social conditions will turn futile. Hence the urgent necessity to improve women's literacy and education which will indirectly help to reduce fertility rates, or what is popularly called the population explosion.

[The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance rendered by K Gopinatha Panicker.]

- ¹ Pratima Asthana, *Women's Movement in India*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi 1974.
- ² Government of India, Ministry of Education, *Educational Statistics at a Glance*, Studies in Educational Statistics, No 7, New Delhi 1972.
- ³ *Pocket Book of Population Statistics*, Census Centenary, 1972, Office of the Registrar General, India.
- ⁴ *A Portrait of Population*, Kerala, Census of India 1971, Director of Census Operations, Kerala.
- ⁵ *Status of Women in India*, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.
- ⁶ "Literacy and World Population", *Population Bulletin*, Vol 30, No 2, Population Reference Bureau, Washington D C.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *A Portrait of Population*, *op. cit.*
- ⁹ *The Educated Women in Indian Society Today*, YWCA of India, Tata-McGraw Hill Publishing Company, Bombay 1971.
- ¹⁰ "Literacy and World Population", *op. cit.*
- ¹¹ Aleyamma George, "Population Growth, Status and Role of Women in India", *Demography India*, Vol 4, No 1, 1975.
- ¹² *The Mysore Population Study, 1961*, United Nations, New York.
- ¹³ National Sample Survey, 1960-61, Government of India, New Delhi.

VIMLA RANDIVE

Working-class Women

DECLARATION of the International Women's Year was the culmination of long-drawn struggles of working women for equal status with men and for equal job opportunities which have been denied to them in the capitalist countries. Reacting to the powerful women's movement, the United Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) declared 1975 as dedicated to the cause of women when their specific demands should be popularized and democratic opinion created.

The Government of India also announced that it had resolved to observe the year in a "befitting manner". Labour Bureau of the Ministry of Labour brought out a book, *Women in Industry*. The government promulgated an ordinance on equal wage for equal work. Leaving aside the argument how far the ordinance will come into practice in different industries, one cannot but wonder why women workers had to wait 28 years after independence for this 'gift' especially in view of the fact that the government had ratified the ILO's equal-wage convention No 100 since 1954. According to annual reports of the ILO, the countries which ratified the convention had been constantly reminded of their responsibility to implement it by introducing necessary legislation. Nothing was done in India till 1975 although the directive principles of the constitution recognize equal status for women and men, and prohibit discrimination

on grounds of sex. Even then it is everybody's knowledge that women in all fields of life are treated as inferior partners.

All the same, one observes a number of programmes carried out by different organizations which have no relevance to the existing conditions. In observation of the International Women's Year, there has been a series of gimmicks like post offices manned by women only, issue of stamps showing dancers, putting women police to guard women's meetings, a woman scientist to preside over the Science Congress, and release of long-term women convicts on the birthday of Indira Gandhi. These create apprehensions about the real aims and objects of the whole business. None of this fanfare takes into account the majority of women who are in the countryside and are illiterate, the women workers who have not heard about the Women's Year at all, poor housewives who are completely engrossed in the housework and looking after the children. To reach these women and make them alive to their rights is a very big job, indeed. And unless every democratically minded person takes up the challenge knowing fully well that it demands a change in his own outlook itself, the cause of the International Women's Year is most likely to be rung out with 1975.

Women Workers

Although a small fraction of working women in the country, women workers in organized industry have an important part to play in changing society by taking up the cause as women and as mothers. Therefore, while giving due consideration to the whole problem of women's emancipation, this article deals with the question of women workers in various industries, their employment and unemployment, working conditions and related problems.

Women employed in the organized sector during March 1971 to March 1973 were as follows:

March 1971	19.24 lakhs
March 1972	20.15 lakhs
March 1973	21.35 lakhs

Including all the states and union territories, the public sector employed about 10.05 lakhs women at the end of March 1973 out of a total of 21.35 lakhs in the organized sector. The state governments accounted for the largest number in the public sector at 4.23 lakhs; local bodies, central government and government establishments accounted for 3.62 lakhs, 0.85 and 1.36 lakhs respectively.

The 21.35 lakh women formed part of 188.24 lakhs in the payroll of the organized sector at the end of March 1973. Women employees thus constituted only about 41 per cent. As observed in the above statistics, the increase in the employment of women in 1973 was about 1.20 lakhs or 5.5 per cent over the previous year, accounted for mainly by jobs for middle-class women. During the last 15 years, the employment of middle-class women as clerks, teachers, doctors and nurses is on the increase.

Outside the organized sector, thousands of women workers are employed in small-scale cottage industries where they have no statutory safeguards against the attacks of the employers. These are trades like the making of beedis, lac and embroidery, and cleaning of dal, spices and grains. In addition are the women engaged as domestic servants in cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi, their social origin being the poorer sections of the working class, scheduled castes and agricultural workers who have come to the cities for a livelihood. These are outside the compass of any labour legislation enacted by the government.

Out of Work

In the latest publication of the Labour Bureau, it is stated that "the number of women employed in factories had gone down from 10.37 per cent in 1963 to 8.73 per cent in 1972". The percentage quotient of workers in the female population and its declining trend emerge from the following figures of the 1971 census report:

Year	Total	Rural	Urban
1961	27.95	31.40	11.09
1971	13.18	14.55	7.37

Retrenchment of women workers assumed massive proportions in cotton textiles, jute and mining where they constituted a sizeable segment of the labour force. In textile mills in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Coimbatore and other places where women were predominantly employed in the winding and ruling departments, the proportion came down to 5 per cent while in jute, actual numbers fell to 9,334 in 1962 from 32,890 in 1952. Coal mines, where in 1944 one worker out of every four was a woman, now employ only 7.6 per cent women. The total estimated strength in the tobacco-curing factories in 1965 was 98,701 of which women constituted 85 per cent. It declined to 64,789 in 1970. Cigarette factories used to employ women to the extent of about two-thirds of the total labour force: a recent survey put it at 12 per cent. Plantation industry is one where women constituted, and still do, a big force in tea, rubber, coffee, cardamom and cinchona. Tea plantations employ about 48 per cent, rubber 27 and coffee 46 per cent. Eighty per cent of the cardamom workers are women.

It is a fact that the planters while increasing the acreage and production of rubber and coffee have drastically reduced the number of workers. Plantation industry which used to employ more than 10 lakhs, at present have jobs for only 8 lakhs. The work-load in tea plantations in India has increased from 278.6 kilos in 1952 to 568 kilos per worker in 1971 as a result of this 'rationalization.'

Unemployment among middle-class women is also growing rapidly as evident from the large number of job seekers on the live register on the eve of the International Women's Year. According to statistics published by the Labour Bureau, "over 9.73 lakhs of women were on the live register of the employment exchange at the end of 1974, i.e. it has gone

up from 5.83 lakhs in 1971 to 7.62 lakhs in 1972; and 9.18 lakhs in 1973. Women represented 11.54 per cent of 84,32,869 total job seekers in 1974." The actual number of unemployed women will be far in excess of official figures since most of them, who are uneducated, do not register their names with the employment exchanges. At the present time, with a serious economic crisis on, women are compelled to enter the labour market on a bigger scale than ever before.

The reasons advanced for the curtailed employment of women are absenteeism, physiological weakness and lack of skill and training. Investigations by official commissions, and private inquiries and studies do not corroborate the assertions of employers.

Employers Retaliate

The mere recommendation for equal wages in coal mines by the Labour Appellate Tribunal Award in 1954 was one of the real factors for the retrenchment of women in collieries on a large scale—a fact which was highlighted in the survey report on labour conditions in coal mines in 1967. The study group stated that "payment of equal wages for men and women, restrictions on their employment during the nights, maternity leave and provision of creches" were the reasons why employers reduced the women labour force. They want to avoid the provisions of the Factory Act which enjoins maternity benefits and other welfare facilities.

The report published in January 1975 by the Committee on the Status of Women also came to the conclusion that the declining trend in the total employment of women in factories and mines was due to "protective health welfare provisions contained in the labour laws applicable to women workers. The policy aimed at equalization of structural changes through rationalization and modernization." It is no coincidence that the proportion of women trained in the Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) in engineering trades is insignificant: the percentages have steadily fallen from 3.03 in 1951 to 0.65 in 1971.

Is reservation of jobs for women a solution to the problem of unemployment? The Committee on Status of Women did discuss the question of reservation. The enormity of the unemployment problem is such that reservation of some jobs for a few women will not obviously get us anywhere. It will create competition among women workers themselves and cause a contradiction between too many women and men seeking too few jobs. At the most, a few women will be benefited, no doubt. But the problem will remain. Therefore, when the question was raised in the discussion with representatives of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) the committee was told that they would not accept the idea on principle. To the suggestion whether it was advisable to employ women underground in the mines, the representative of the CITU replied in the negative explaining that it would harm the health of women workers.

The wage difference between men and women in such industries, as plantations, beedi, construction, cashew and coir ranges from Rs 4.8

to Rs 3.00 per day. The question of wage inequality was referred by the CITU to ILO in 1972, giving details of various industries and appealing to bring pressure on the Government of India to enact laws in implementation of conventions 100 and 101 to which it is a signatory. The ILO referred the matter to the Government of India asking for clarification. The Ministry of Labour raised this question in the conference of the state labour ministers in August 1974, where the Union Labour Minister announced that the unequal wage would be discontinued after May 1975. The state governments were requested to take steps accordingly. An ordinance was promulgated by the President on 26 September 1975 for paying equal wage for equal work to men and women. The plantation industry was required by a notification to fall in line from 15 October 1975. Now it transpires that plantation owners have requested the central government to defer the date of implementation, as they want to "study the implications of the ordinance."

Volte-face

The ordinance is full of loopholes. According to it each industry is to be notified separately for putting it into operation. In other words, it does not automatically apply to every industry. Secondly, the definition of equal work having been left vague employers are bound to take advantage of it by introducing more piece-work where women are likely to give less output. Thirdly, there is no provision for special enforcement machinery under which women workers can get justice if they are not paid the same rates or retrenched en masse. There is, for example, no provision for imprisonment of the employer if he contravenes the rules. A penalty of Rs 2000 to Rs 5000 will be a poor deterrent indeed. Under these circumstances, one begins to wonder how far this piece of legislation will do any good.

There are a thousand and one ways to dodge the rules and regulations, as the enforcement machinery of the government always works in favour of the employers. The leaders in government who depend upon generous donations from the employers for elections and party funds are not keen on ensuring that their own ordinances and laws are carried out in the interest of the workers. The CITU warned the government that one result of such legislations and ordinances was bound to be further curtailment of women employment in the industries.

Therefore, pressure from trade unions and mass organizations is indispensable for any effectuation of labour laws so that the just and long-standing demand of women workers can be realized at least during the International Women's Year, if not soon after. The question of unequal wage is a part of the general discrimination towards women and unless mass pressure builds up from below for equal wage for equal work, no legislation will be translated into practice. Trade unions must constantly raise the issue and give the lead.

Compared to other capitalist countries, the general level of

women's wages in all the industries in India is miserably low, ranging from Rs 1.50 to Rs 3.00 per day. Workers in unorganized industries who are not covered by any labour law get still less even by working long hours. The plight of women sweepers and scavengers working for municipalities and local bodies deserve special attention. These sections, brutally neglected and discriminated against by caste Hindus, have been denied the advantage of various labour enactments such as maternity benefit, provident fund and so on. The women who do hazardous jobs in clay-digging and brick-moulding under the contract labour system also have the same story to tell.

Discrimination is most blatant in the unequal opportunities for job placement and advancement. As the ILO stated in one of its reports, in allotting a job, the first chance is given to a man rather than a woman in spite of qualifications being the same. Prospects for advancement are brighter for men while women's claims are overlooked.

Bias in Jobs

A survey was made recently in the textile mills of Vidarbha where 410 women workers were covered for enquiry about their working conditions, job prospects and so on. Surprisingly it was found that out of the 410 women interviewed, only 2 could get a higher-ranking job while the rest had no promotion at all in spite of their long years of service ranging from 10 to 24 years. Almost all of them told the surveyors that they were denied the higher job to which they were rightly entitled. When the promotions were announced, they found themselves superseded by male workers.

Middle-class women, educated and modernized, are confronted with prejudice in offices and other establishments. Married women generally go by the board when it comes to selection for jobs. There used to be a bar against married women entering the Administrative and Foreign Services. In Bombay, an overwhelming number of girls work in pharmaceutical companies. According to the terms of the appointment contract, they had to leave jobs as soon as they got married. This continued till 1964-65, when the union went to the High Court against this gross discrimination. When the judgment went in favour of the employer, the girls proceeded to the Supreme Court where the order for abrogation of the rule was passed. But there was no reinstatement for the victimized employees.

Women who have been engaged on a large scale as domestic servants in cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi, work on a poor wage: for a total earning of Rs. 50-60 a month, they have to work at three or four places during the day. In Bombay, women workers from scheduled castes are employed as domestic servants in Parsee families as caste Hindus would not have them inside their homes.

The sad plight of these women in Calcutta is beyond description. Most of them are the breadwinners since the husbands have stayed back in the villages to work as agricultural workers. These women while going

to work early in the morning carry the small infants along and leave them in the streets. It is a harrowing experience for a passer-by to watch a baby of 5 or 6 months tied by rope to a pole or tree with nobody to look after it. There is no union to speak for such women and efforts to organize have proved fruitless because of the specific nature of their work.

Working Mothers

The Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and provisions for creches and other facilities under the Factory Act have been in the statute book for quite some time, but all this has helped only a small fraction of the workers.

Loopholes in the existing Maternity Benefit Act deprive women workers of the cash assistance. It is found that the employer almost always manipulates a break in the service of a woman worker to avoid the cash payment, as only continuous working for 160 days entitles her to it. In many cases, she continues to work till childbirth. Most women, being ignorant of their entitlements, forgo the maternity leave and the benefit. Those who know their rights are threatened by the management with dismissal and prevented from making a claim. If the union is strong enough to protect the rights of women, they get the cash and the leave. The cash benefit is so small that it is not even sufficient for the most essential medicines. Maternity leave for six weeks before and after delivery is far from adequate to recoup from the confinement.

The problem of a working mother to look after the children is a serious one, and therefore, only a creche near the place of work can meet this need. Factory Act 1948 enjoins provision of a creche where more than 50 women are employed. A demand is being made that the number should be lowered to 25 so that more women can take advantage of this facility. The actual conditions in creches wherever they exist are bad enough, according to reports available. In many places there is neither any milk for the children nor trained nurses or *ayahs* to look after them.

Under these circumstances, the words "sacred motherhood" in the Constitution of India has been bereft of all meaning. Motherhood must become the responsibility of the society. Engels termed "the recognition of motherhood as a social function" 150 years back, which has become a reality only under socialism. A working mother will work better in the factory or office only when she knows that her child is fully taken care of.

There are only a few well-equipped maternity hospitals for women workers. In the plantation industry in north India it is not unusual for women to give birth in the field. The gardens are generally situated far from the cities and nearly 65 per cent have no hospitals or clinics with doctors in attendance.

Under the Factory Act 1948, there are certain provisions made for women workers for separate bathrooms, sitting rooms, and latrines with proper screening. But these amenities, provision of which is obligatory on the employers, are woefully lacking.

Under Union Banner

According to the statistics published by the Labour Bureau, the number of women in registered trade unions in 1968 was 421,067, which was 8.2 per cent of union membership. It had come down from 9.3 per cent in 1961-62. Women are either not interested in, or left out of, union activity. This is no doubt a sad picture for the women workers and more so for the trade unions. To bring women into trade union activity under these conditions requires extreme patience and political consciousness. It is true that many unions lack these qualities. It is also true that trade unions do not pay sufficient attention to the specific demands of women workers concerning retrenchment and redundancy, low wages and welfare benefits.

Many trade union leaders and activists who have not freed themselves from the feudal outlook, never try to enlist women, nor are they willing to put them in any organizational posts. Women workers are taken into confidence only when a strike or struggle is in the offing. These gaps can be filled only by giving more responsibility to women in the unions and offering executive posts whenever they are found to be mature enough and, above all, by accepting them as equal partners in society.

In the literature published so far in connection with the International Women's Year, some sort of an organizational call to mobilize working women on their specific problems has been given. CITU discussed this proposal a few years back accepting the necessity of a separate 'wing' of women workers in each industry to organize them and to facilitate their coming under the union banner around specific and common demands.

Women workers have proved their mettle and militancy in the trade union movement during various struggles. Ever since 1930, in the major strikes in textiles and jute and in the *bundhs* in different states, they stood side by side with men under the banners of their unions. They have taken lead in picketing the gates when on strike, organized processions and addressed meetings. They went to jail in hundreds in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. They *gheraoed* the managements in Karnataka and Bengal for hours together till the demands were met, and held special conventions in jute mills, mines and plantations for specific demands.

The severe repression which women workers had to face during recent years in the form of assault and rape, lathi charge and firing has steeled them in their determination and convinced them of the correctness of the path of struggle. Because of participation in the struggles, they have come into trade unions more actively along with their brothers. As Lenin has taught us, no revolutionary struggle will be successful unless the masses of women participate in it.

Women in India have been largely prevented from playing their role in national production. The masses of women in the rural areas are unemployed and have to depend upon their menfolk for livelihood.

They have nothing like equality in economic, social or political life. And worst of all, they are not yet aware either of their status or rights.

Indian women, in general, are socially backward, economically dependent and politically not conscious enough. They have obscurantist ideas which continue to influence them in the absence of proper political guidance. The percentage of literacy among women is only 18. Millions of them are to be roused against their exploitation. They must be made conscious of their unequal status in society and of the tremendous role they have to play as active partners in building the new society.

Looking beyond 1975

In fact, the International Women's Year gave a good opportunity to establish contact with thousands of women in the rural and urban areas. Women's organizations could have utilized the time more purposefully, by explaining the issues facing them and deliberating on the ways to abolish their age-old slavery. It must be admitted that we could not do very much along these lines.

Only under the socialist system do freedom and "sacred motherhood" become realities. Indian women have a long way to go to achieve this objective. They will have to fight alongside their brothers in order to establish the democratic system which will pave the way to socialism. The responsibility rests much more on the shoulders of all democratically minded people, on men especially, to work for the cause of women, to abolish the exploitation and slavery to which they are being subjected for no fault of theirs, and to emancipate them, socially, economically and politically. We must not rest till justice is done to the thousands of working women who will be in the forefront of the democratic struggles leading to socialism.

LEELA GULATI

Sex Discrimination in Wages

SEX DISCRIMINATION¹ in wages can take a number of forms. The most blatant is paying women less than men for the same type of work. There is the practice of restricting women to low-paid jobs and denying them access to better-paid positions which are reserved exclusively for men. A subtler form of discrimination is that in whatever jobs to which women have access, they are employed for fewer hours, days or weeks, so that the quantum of work is considerably less than that available to men. The last two types do not and need not show any obvious wage differentiation because on paper, men and women are paid the same wage for the same type of work. In reality since women are restricted to low-paid jobs there can be said to be in effect a sort of wage discrimination. Similarly, a lower quantum of work is bound to result in women earning less. This also amounts to wage discrimination.

No study of wage discrimination against women will be complete unless it covers all its manifestations whether open or subtle. Nevertheless for the limited purpose of this article, attention is centred only on the open type of wage discrimination, found to exist on quite a large scale in India². Is there a possible satisfactory explanation for this type of wage discrimination against women.³ It is hoped that through a review of the various economic explanations offered from time to time, the

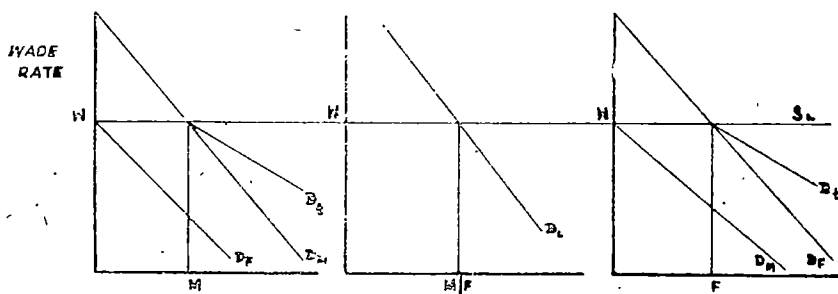
questions that are more pertinent than others may be pinpointed.

Why do women get paid less for the same type of work? The theory of wage determination which one most commonly encounters in economic literature is the marginal productivity theory of distribution which says that factors of production get paid according to their marginal product. This theory states that wage differences can be explained in terms of productivity differences. Thus if the women workers are only half as productive as men, their wage cannot exceed half as much.⁴

Productivity Difference

But is it indeed true that women are less productive than men and uniformly so? Long ago it was conceded that while there were differences in productivity, there were other aspects to be considered. A distinction was drawn between three type of occupations: (1) female occupations which are exclusively entered by women; (2) male occupations in which females do not overstep the lines; and (3) mixed occupations in which are found both men and women. According to Edgeworth, not only will women's earnings in female occupations be less than men's earnings in exclusively male occupations but will be lower also in mixed occupations. Though he makes a distinction between rate of pay and weekly earnings, to say that while the rate may be the same for men and women, the weekly earnings will not be the same is a fine distinction which does not help us very much to clarify matters.⁵ But under the regime of perfect competition assumed by Edgeworth, if women are as productive as men in mixed occupations they will be substituted for men and there can be no mixed occupation as long as female labour is cheaper than male labour. In fact as long as there are mixed occupations where both male and female workers are employed, the wage rate should be uniform throughout all the occupations. Then male occupations should be so called not because the male wage is higher than female wage but because only male labour is employed in that occupation. The same would apply to female occupation. This can be demonstrated with the help of diagram I.

DIAGRAM I: COMPETITIVE WAGE DISCRIMINATION



(a) Male Occupation (b) Mixed Occupation (c) Female Occupation

The three sub-diagrams represent three categories of occupations as classified by Edgeworth. In male occupation only males are employed because D_F , the demand curve for female labour falls below W the wage rate; in female occupation it is the other way round and in the mixed occupation D_F and D_M merge into one D_L , there being no difference in male and female productivity. Note that the supply of labour is represented by SL which indicates perfect elasticity of total labour, that is, supply of male and female labour taken together. The sorting takes place between male and female labour from the demand side. If at wage W no female worker is employed it is because at that wage the value of their marginal product is less than W and not because women are not forthcoming; the same can be said for the absence of male employment in the female occupation. It is in the mixed occupation where on grounds of productivity there is little to choose between male and female labour that the question arises as to the proportion in which they will be combined. But this should be no different from the proportions in which they combine in the labour force.⁶

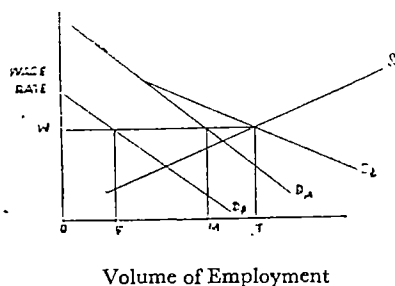
In fact it appears that under competitive conditions wage discrimination is not possible on the basis of differences in productivity even if one made the sort of assumption deriving from Plato's view that women are less efficient than men in all jobs though the disparity is not the same in all the jobs.

Inferiority Coefficient

The latest theory from Chicago to explain wage discrimination against black workers seems to do precisely this in that given the taste for discrimination on the part of the white discriminators, a black worker is considered inferior and the evaluation of this inferiority can be expressed in terms of the lower wage offered to him. Thus if the white worker is paid W_w in a particular job, the black worker in the same job is offered only $W_w(1-d)$, where d is the inferiority or discrimination coefficient.⁷ However as we shall see in the following paragraph even the existence of this taste for discrimination need not result in actual wage discrimination.

The existence of this discrimination is assumed to be universal so that there is no talk then of some occupations where the black man is

DIAGRAM II



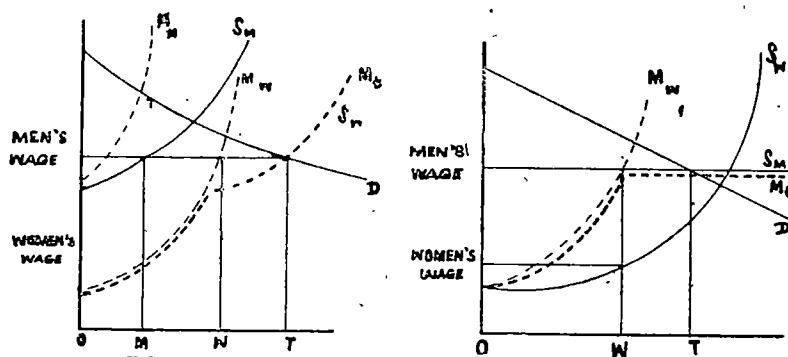
considered superior to the white worker and others where he is inferior, and still others where he is considered on par. Once it is clear what Becker is talking about, it can be demonstrated that under competitive conditions of wage determination, discrimination will reflect itself not in wages but in the quantum of employment offered to the group that is considered inferior. In diagram II, both males and females earn a wage rate of W but of the total employment, OT , females get OF and males OM (by definition $OF + OM = OT$ and D_M is above D_F , $OM > OF$)

In fact, one could go further and say that to the extent that notions of inferiority are irrational and have no basis in actual productivity differences (deriving from either race or sex) employers should gradually see the folly of their prejudices and as a result discrimination even in employment should go.

Labour Monopsony

Once one gives up the competitive assumption, it is not difficult to establish theoretically the existence of wage discrimination between men and women. Joan Robinson showed it long back that one did not have to rely on a proposition about inequality in productivity between the sexes to establish wage discrimination⁸. She assumes that the labour market is monopsonistic and that conditions of supply of male labour are not the same as those of female labour. To obtain sex discrimination in wages she shows that given monopsonistic conditions, it will obtain even if one of the sections, that is, male labour, is organized. (See diagram III). Interestingly however, in both the cases, with which she actually demonstrates her theory, though men get higher wages than women they are employed in smaller numbers than women. This follows the moment one assumes that the male supply curve is above the female supply curve⁹. It is this latter part of her result which cannot be easily reconciled with reality. In actual fact, women are discriminated against not only in wages but also in employment. Also it appears quite crucial to her argument that monopsonistic conditions should prevail in the labour market. We know from experience however, that in India there is open wage discrimination against female farm

DIAGRAM III: MONOPSONISTIC WAGE DETERMINATION



workers in all the operations they are employed¹⁰ even though the existence of monopsonistic conditions in the market for farm workers is not so easy to establish. Also in India female farm workers are discriminated against in terms not only of wages but also of the quantum of employment¹¹.

On the basis of the received doctrine it is difficult to relate economic theory so far to the existence of the type of almost all-pervasive sex discrimination in wages in what may be considered as the least of skill-intensive work, namely farm labour in India. The moment one introduces the concept of skill, while one may not be in a position easily to dismiss differences in productivity, one really has to go behind these differences and ask how these evolved over a long period that women were deliberately denied the opportunities to imbibe or learn the skills. The question we shall then be facing is how can these sex differences in productivity based on differences in skills be explained? But, is there any justification for paying women less even for jobs where there is no basis to claim male superiority in productivity? Economic theory so far seems to have failed us.

¹ The term 'sex discrimination' is used here in a much narrower sense than 'sex inequality'. It was, for example, the latter that concerned Engels when he traced the links between family structure, capitalism and female oppression in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Later on, Marxists dwelt at length on the link between the confinement of women to household chores and their exploitation. Lenin for instance, laid great store by the necessity "for women to participate in common productive labour" so that "women will occupy the same position as men." See his *The Emancipation of Women*. What we are concerned with in this article is even narrower in that we concentrate on the discrimination against those women who are already in the work force, participating in what Lenin called common productive labour.

² *Towards Equality*, Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, 1974, chapter V, "Roles, Rights and Opportunities for Economic Participation". Also, Report of the National Commission on Labour in India, 1969 and Leela Gulati, "Sex Discrimination in Farm Wages," *Economic Times*, 16 September 1975.

³ Although I have drawn this distinction between different forms of wage discrimination with a view to clearly indicating the type I am concerned with in this article, this distinction is even otherwise very useful. For instance, in studying attempts at enforcing equal pay for equal work it is important to remember that open wage discrimination can easily be driven underground, to borrow a term from Germaine Greer, author of *The Female Eunuch*, in the two other forms of wage discrimination mentioned.

⁴ V B Karnik, *Indian Labour: Problems and Prospects*, 1974. In his chapter on "Women in Industry", Karnik points out that "an argument is always put forward that the work turned out by a woman is not of equal value with that turned out by a man and on that ground lower wages are fixed for women in a number of cases". It must be added here that this is not an argument of laymen. F Y Edgeworth felt that men and women were inherently unequal in what he called secondary and tertiary characteristics. These are the tendencies to leave and marry, to be too emotional in crisis and to be less able to handle relationships with men, while working. J R Hicks, now a Nobel laureate in Economics maintains that women are generally paid less than men simply because they are generally considered less efficient due to their

physical limitations and their mental preoccupations with domestic problems. Maurice Dobb, in his *Wages* (1959), also notes that "it is sometimes said that because women are more liable to illness...apply themselves temporarily to an employer for this reason alone".

- ⁵ Plato is said to have considered women to be generally less efficient in all arts but lesser men have been less dogmatic. See for instance FY Edgeworth. "Equal Pay to Men and Women for Equal Work", *Economic Journal*, 1922. Maurice Dobb, in his book *Wages* written first in 1928, spoke of operations in which "women will be definitely superior, as in certain operations of cotton spinning or in teaching small children; while for heavy masculine operations like coal hewing and iron moulding women will clearly be unsuited".
- ⁶ Janice Fanning Madden, *The Economics of Sex Discrimination*, Duke University, 1972. Janice Madden draws (p 57) a diagram only for the mixed occupation to show that *there at least* both males and females work at the same wage rate. She differentiates between the supply of male and female labour so that more females are forthcoming than men for a given wage. Possibly, the underlying assumption is that if men are getting a higher wage in the male occupation then what the women are getting in the female occupation (as Joan Robinson would put it, male transfer wage) is higher than female wage. But then the mixed occupation would not remain so. It will become a female occupation.]
- ⁷ Gary S Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination*, University of Chicago Press 1957. Actually Becker chooses to express his " d^2 ", the discrimination coefficient, in terms of the premium over and above the black worker's wage. His equation would read as:

$$W_w = (1+d) W_n$$
- ⁸ Joan Robinson, *The Economics of Imperfect Competition*, 1969, pp 301-4.
- ⁹ Maurice Dobb also subscribes to the view than "in explaining the wideness of this difference (between wages of male and female labour) the conditions of supply of female labour probably plays a decisive part." He goes on: "If the supply-price of women's labour is generally lower than that of men, this by itself would suffice to explain the lower rates paid in women's trades. This in fact seems to be the case", *Wages* 1959, p 150.
- ¹⁰ Leela Gulati, "Sex Discrimination in Farm Wages", *op. cit.*,
- ¹¹ Here again, Maurice Dobb has an explanation to offer when he suggests that "in any given locality the supply curve of women's labour, after a point, becomes distinctly inelastic in the sense that a steadily rising price would have to be offered to attract additional quantities of women's labour into the labour market...Special circumstances are necessary to swell their ranks in any appreciable numbers from among those who usually stay at home and attend to domestic duties, This inelasticity of supply beyond a point, when combined with the fact that competition between employers for labour is imperfect, will result in the wages of those in employment remaining low, and employers being reluctant to extend their employment of women for fear of this increased demand for female labour raising the price of this labour all round to their own disadvantage". *Wages*, p 153.

'Absolutely' First Class!

There's class about Air-India

Come and belong to the most exclusive club in the air. You could be sitting next to men who move big business, or a famous Nobel prize winner you've been reading about. You could be saying "Kanpai" (Cheers!) in sparkling Japanese style, or discussing behind the scenes with a lovely, French starlet!

Air-India's First Class

Our air hostesses speak five languages very fluently: Hindi, English, French, Foods and Wines.

You'll discover the sensual pleasures of eating when you plunge your fork into a luscious 'Poulet Chasseur' or discuss Plato over a plate of exotic caviar. And when you lift your frosted glass of

champagne and look into the warm eyes of a beautiful air hostess, you'll know you have really lived. (There's enough to get you high and happy!) Later when (if) you leave your super cushioned throne, you can saunter up to the suave Maharajah Lounge, our plush 747 clubroom. Play a round of bridge, make important contacts, clinch a deal.

Or do something you've always wanted to—nothing!

You haven't really flown if you haven't flown Air-India. First Class.

***Be a First-class
Air-Indian***



JAG SHIPS

At Your Service

For quick and efficient carriage
entrust your shipments
to

THE GREAT EASTERN SHIPPING CO., LTD.,

Efficient Cargo Services
India/Japan/India
West Coast USA -Canada/India-Ceylon
Indian Coast
International Tramp Trade

Registered Office:

Mercantile Bank Building,
60, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay-23.

Telephone No. 258961 (8 Lines)

Telex : { 2719
2824
2217

Branch Office:

5, Clive Row,
Calcutta-1.

Telephone No. 220561

(7 Lines)
Telex : TLX 7339.



VAIDYARATNAM P.S. VARIER'S
ARYA VAIDYA SALA

Pioneers in Ayurveda

KOTTAKKAL

Pin Code : 676503

(Kerala State) Estd. 1902

Phone: Head Office: 31, Nursing Home: 44, Chief Physician: 25, Managing Trustee: 61 (Office) 27 (Residence)

Branches at :

Madras (Phone : 666226), Kozhikode (72155), Palghat (3104), Erode (3172), Tirur (231), Ernakulam (33026), Alwaye (549), Trivandrum (62439) and Cannanore (4164) and over 200 authorized Agencies and Depots.

Genuine Standard Ayurvedic Medicines and Expert Medical Advice are available at the Head Office at Kottakkal and all Branches, Depots and Agencies. Medical advice through correspondence is given by the Chief Physician at Kottakkal.

Special Treatments like Pizhichil, Navarakkizhi etc., are conducted under the supervision of the Chief Physician at the Golden Jubilee Nursing Home, Kottakkal. Please reserve your rooms in advance and come only after getting confirmation.

Persons desiring to consult the Chief Physician are requested to come only after fixing an appointment in advance.

MANAGING TRUSTEE

**Wishing the Trivandrum Conference
on Women All Success**

**Friction Control Products
& Services Co.**

Manufacturers of cutting oils, lubricants
and speciality oils.

2, Cross Road,
Madras-600081.
Grams: FRICON.

Products of

J & P Coates Limited
Coates Printing Inks
Kores (India) Limited
Orient Paper Mills Limited
Sirpur Paper Mills Limited
Mysore Paper Mills Limited
West Coast Paper Mills Limited
Thungabhadra Pulp & Board Mills Limited
Bharat Carbon & Ribbon Mfg. Company Limited

are distributed by

Branches :

VADAYATTUKOTTAI

Quilon-691001

Phone: 3629.

Grams 'KAGHAZ'

BIG BAZAAR,
Quilon-1.

P. A. GEORGE & CO

PAPER AND BOARDS

H. O JETTY ROAD

ALLEPPEY-688001.

Telephones Office: 3468

Res: 3603

Quality-wise ALIND gives you the best!



Conductor-grade aluminium rods
ACSR (Aluminium Conductors Steel Reinforced)
AAC (All-Aluminium Conductors)
Conductor accessories & tools
High-tensile galvanised steel core wire
Stay-wire
Earth-wire
Insulated aluminium cables
Solidal cables for underground power distribution

Wire-drawing machines
(For ferrous and non-ferrous items)
Wire-stranding machines
(Tubular & Planetary)
Laying-up machines
Telephone cable assembling machines
Caterpillar Capstans
Sector-shaping units
Bunching-machines
Other ancillary equipment

HV Switchgear
Instrument transformers



THE ALUMINIUM INDUSTRIES LIMITED

Registered Office : Kundara (Kerala)

Works at : Kundara • Hirakud • Hyderabad • Warran

carbons AL-1

**WE TALK FINANCE IN DIFFERENT
DIALECTS—**

Yet we are disciplined.

We mean financial discipline. The need of the hour. It takes talent. Team-work. And knowledge of fundamentals to practise. Two decades of expertise have made us money-lingual. Yet we uphold the very precepts on which we function. Prudence. Stability. To assure you the right result. At the right time.

SUDARSAN—THE CHIT TO PROSPERITY

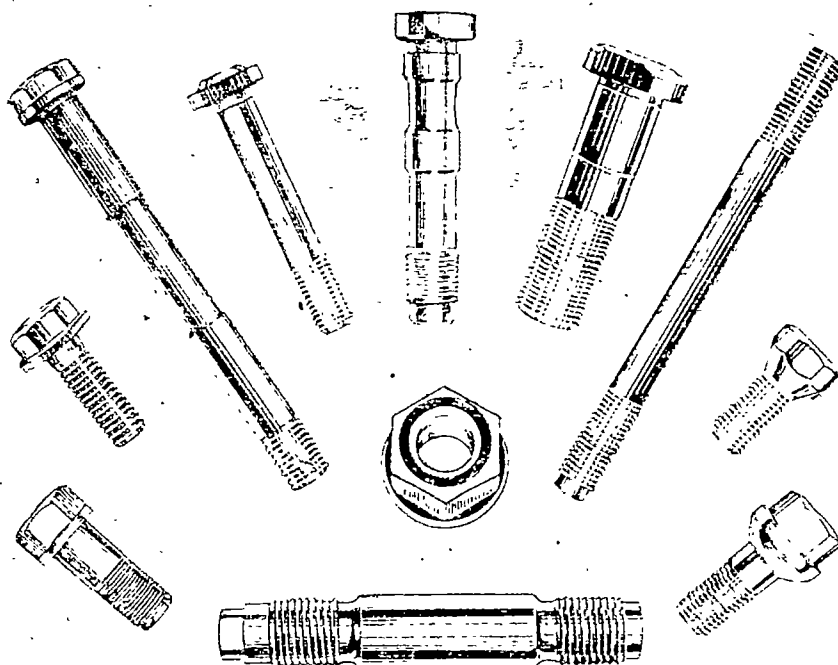
SUDARSAN CHITS (INDIA) LTD.,

(Subsidiary of Sudarsan Trading Co. Ltd..)

Regd. Office : CALICUT-673011

Central Office : 16/1, Whites Road,

MADRAS-600 014.



Where fastening is critical 'TVS' fasteners are the first choice

'TVS' high tensile fasteners are precision-made on the most modern machines.

They are heat-treated in a sophisticated atmosphere-controlled furnace—the first of its kind in India for heat treating fasteners—to ensure against scaling and surface decarburisation during process.

The 'TVS' fastener plant is the centre for pioneering indigenisation of the

most critical fasteners hitherto imported into India.

Whether you order 'con-rod' bolts and 'counter-weight' bolts to be specially engineered to your design or 'collar screws' and 'studs' to specific ASTM standards for high temperature, high pressure applications or any fastener to meet critical dimensional, physical and metallurgical properties, specify 'TVS'—the most trusted high tensile fastener in India today.



Mail your enquiries to:

Sundram Fasteners Limited

37 Mount Road, Madras 600006 Factory: at Palli, Madras 600050

55.7705

Telegram: "SELECT"

Phone: Shop: 2471
Res : 3281

ESTRELLA BATTERIES

Stockist: U. SHAHUL HAMEED & BROTHER
TOBACCO & GENERAL MERCHANT, BIG BAZAAR, QUILON-2.



എസ്റ്റേഴ്ല ബാറ്ററീസ്

ബാറ്ററീ ഓഫ്



GLOBAL SNOWBALL?

At any given time, you will find a branch of ours working somewhere in the world. How's that for a beginning? And yet, we have the largest number of foreign branches among Indian Banks (29, to be precise, including our Uganda subsidiary), spread over different parts of the globe, such as the U.K., East Africa (Kenya & Uganda), Mauritius, Fiji Islands, Guyana and United Arab Emirates. And of course, over 780 branches throughout India.

All this and more — expert assistance and prompt, courteous service at all our branches. No wonder, so many businessmen and others at home and abroad prefer to bank with us.

Hello
big world
Bank of Baroda
is a-coming!



Bank of Baroda

A Government of India Undertaking

Shipl-808 26A/74

With
Compliments
from
a
WELL-WISHER

Merry Christmas and a Bright New Year

from the staff and management of

S B PRESS TRIVANDRUM 1.

Although you may not have noticed it, our name has a place in every issue of the *Social Scientist*, in small print, of course.

In fact, we have been printing everything big and small on the pages of the journal since it moved to Trivandrum. We do our best in the job of enhancing its readability.

Now, on completing two years' association with the *Social Scientist*, it is an occasion to extend our heartiest seasonal greetings to all our patrons, the readers of the *Social Scientist* and the delegates to the All India Conference on Women.

LET THE SUNSHINE INTO YOUR HOME

Coir floor coverings add a splash of colour, gaiety and happiness to your home. You have 593 different ways to get Coir sunshine into your home—with that many designs to choose from.

What's more, Coir floor covering stays cool during summer and keeps the chill off your feet during winter. It is dust-proof and lasts a long time.

Take a look at the wide range of Coir products in our Show-rooms—It's going to sweep you right off your feet.

* Door Mats * Matting * Mourzouks * Pile Carpets * Rubberised Coir Cushioning.

COIR PRODUCTS - Easy on your feet
Easy on your wallet

For your requirements please contact :

SECRETARY, COIR BOARD, COCHIN-682016 (KERALA)

OR

**VISIT ANY OF OUR SHOW ROOMS AND SALES DEPOTS
AT: NEW DELHI, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, BANGALORE,
MADRAS, COCHIN, CHANDIGARH, BHUBANESWAR,
MADURAI, PATNA, HYDERABAD AND JAMMU OR ANY
OF OUR ACCREDITED DEALERS.**

- KERALA** the crucible of social change
- * Women have been at the helm of affairs at home and in society from time immemorial
 - * Marumakkathayam (matrilineal) system was in vogue
 - * High literacy among the people, especially women
 - * Temple entry proclamation throwing open temples to all Hindus
- Tribal welfare measures
——the list is endless

And the progress continues unabated

TO KNOW KERALA

SEE KERALA

Tourist centres, health resorts, hill stations, projects, wild life sanctuaries,

educational institutions, museums, art and dance academies, temples, murals——there is an endless variety of attractions.

For details:

TOURIST OFFICE

DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM

PARK VIEW :: OPP: MUSEUM

TRIVANDRUM

FROM CANADA TO CANBERRA

her fragrance launched on a hundred ships

INDIAN CARDAMOM

Adds

Flavour to Food

and

Exchange to Exchequer

India earned Rs. 11.55 crores during 1973-74
and Rs. 13.32 crores during 1974-75 by her exports
of Cardamom to over 50 nations
covering

U. S. A., CANADA, U.K., CONTINENT,
U. S. S. R., MIDDLE EAST & FAR EAST

CARDAMOM

Mixes with Coffee in Middle East
Entertains with meat and bread in Europe
Can twist with tea, lace liquor and
Makes breath a breath-taking Sweetness

Issued by Cardamom Board, Cochin-682018

IT IS NOT ONLY BRAZIL
WHERE THE NUTS COME FROM.
YOU WILL BE NUTS ON CASHEWS
WHEN YOU GET THEM FROM

KERALA NUT FOOD CO.

Cashew Processors, Exporters & Importers

P. O. Box No. 80

Parameswar Nagar

Quilon-691001.

(Division of Messrs K Parameswaran Pillai)

TELEPHONES Office : 3324, 3411
Res : 2241, 3992

CODES USED

BENTLEY'S SECOND PHRASE
ACME AND PRIVATE

Telegram : NUTFOOD, QUILON
Telex : NUTFOOD, 088-203

THE KERALA CERAMICS LTD.

*THE BEST PORCELAIN FROM THE BEST CLAY IN THE
COUNTRY — FOR STAR HOTELS AS WELL AS FOR
MODEST HOMES — GRAZE PROOF — SCRATCH AND
CHIP RESISTANT — LONG LASTING COLOUR — UNIQUE
RANGE OF COLOUR, SHADES AND SIZES—MODESTLY
PRICED — AVAILABLE AT ALL CROCKERY HOUSES.*

THE KERALA CERAMICS LTD.,
KUNDARA P. O., KERALA

NUTS TO YOU FROM INDIAN NUT PRODUCTS

CASHEW PROCESSORS, EXPORTERS & IMPORTERS

P. B. No. 53

QUILON 691009 S. India

(Division of Messrs K PARAMESWARAN PILLAI)

CODES USED:

BENTLEY'S SECOND PHRASE
AND PRIVATE

TELEPHONES: { Office: 3391
 " 3496

AFTER HOURS: 2899

" 4114

TELEGRAM: PRODIND, QUILON.

TELEX: INP 088 223

INDUSTRY FOR THE INDUSTRIES

The TCC is industry for industries.
This may seem an exaggeration.
Nevertheless it is a fact. Can
modern life be imagined without
Soap, Rayons, Paper, Vanaspathi,
Fertilizers, Aluminium, Petrol,
Paint, Synthetic fibres, Leather,
Plastics, Perfumes etc.? Chemi-
cals produced in the TCC
form the basis for the manu-
facture of all these products.

A pioneer producer of

* CAUSTIC SODA

* SODIUM HYDROSULPHITE

T.C.C.

* SODIUM SULPHIDE

Serves industries and

* HYDROCHLORIC ACID

through them

and

the country and the people

* Other allied chemicals.

THE TRAVANCORE-COCHIN

CHEMICALS LIMITED

UDYOGAMANDAL-683501, KERALA

Screening all over Kerala

Hrishikesh Mukherji's

MILI (Hindi-colour)

STARRING ASHOK KUMAR, JAYABADHURI,
AMITABACHAN, AND OTHERS

Directed by:

HRISHIKESH MUKHERJI

Music

S. D. BURMAN

Await our next film:

General Pictures'

KANCHANASEETHA

കാഞ്ചനസീത

C. N. SREEKANTAN NAIR

ARAVINDAN

RAVI

a prathap release



KANCHEEPURAM PURE SILK SAREES

WITH LATEST ELEGANT DESIGNS

Please Visit:

**THE KANCHEEPURAM KAMAKSHIAMMAN SILK
HANDLOOM WEAVERS' Co-Op.**

PRODUCTION AND SALE SOCIETY LTD., No. G. 1612.

168-A, GANDHI ROAD, KANCHEEPURAM-1. Phone : 2022

Sales Depot :-

- 1) 27. 11 AGRAHARAM, SALEM-1
- 2) 28-10-16, MASID STREET, ARUNDLPET, VIJAYAWADA 520 002

Best Wishes

from

GOOD MORNING STORES
LEADING TEXTILE DEALERS
IN ALLEPPEY

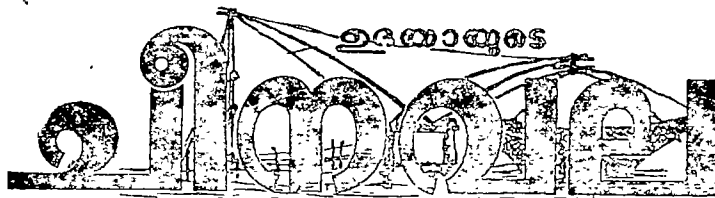
UDAYA

presents

CHEENAYALA

(Eastman colour)

Shows starting on Christmas Eve (24 December 1975)
at Trivandrum Central Theatre and sixteen
other centres



സംവിധാനം: കുഞ്ചാക്കോ. (ജഗദീശ്വരൻ)

STARRING: PREM NAZIR, UMMER, THIKKURISY,
ADOOR BHASI, SHANKARADY, JANARDHANAN
JAYABHARATI, MEENA, (KPAC) LALITHA
and others.

Direction: KUNCHACKO

Story and Dialogue: Sarangapani. Songs: Vayalar. Music: Arjunan

AMRUTANJAN LTD.

makers of household remedies
for over 75 years!

- **AMRUTANJAN PAIN BALM**
for headache, body-ache, sprains,
bad cold, cough, muscular pain
- **AMRUTANJAN GRIPE MIXTURE**
for babies' indigestion & teething troubles
- **AMRUTANJAN DERMAL OINTMENT**
for eczema, ringworm, scabies, etc
- **AMRUTANJAN INHALER**
for clogged or running nose, sneezes, head-cold, etc
- **ANOLEUM—COLD RUB**
a powerful force against coughs & colds
- **SALOFEN—ANALGESIC TABLETS**
for headache, flu, body-ache, toothache

AMRUTANJAN LTD.
Madras-4

...Popular in India
and Abroad!



FD-1 A-1759A

Seafood from India is increasingly in demand in far-flung markets of the world. Frozen and canned shrimp, frozen froglegs and lobsters and host of other seafood from India are finding favour with gourmets the world over.

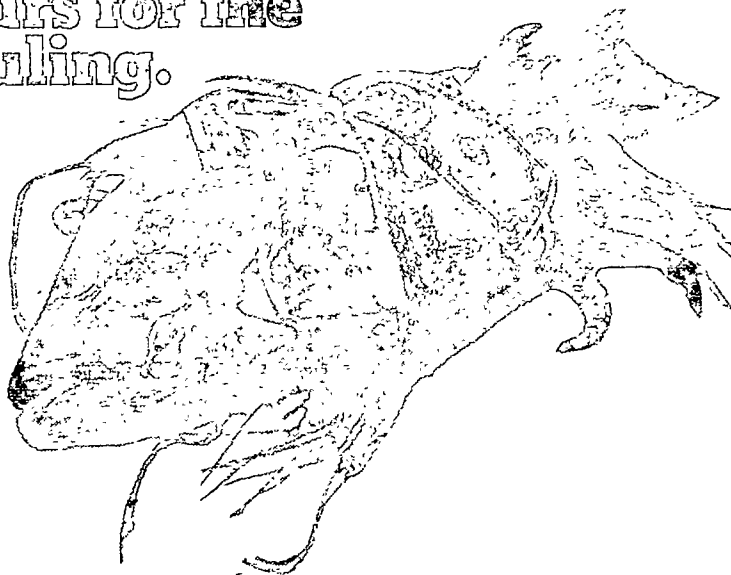
Seafood exports earned for the country foreign exchange worth over Rs. 760 million in 1974.

The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) can help you launch into this exciting field. We are engaged in the promotion and regulation of the fishing industry and the seafood export trade.

Our consultancy services include market surveys, technical information and assistance in all phases of your project from fishing through processing to exporting. If you're looking for a promising industry that is export-oriented, just drop us a line.

We'll help you haul in your fortune in seafood.

**A fortune in our seas.
Yours for the
hauling.**



MPEDA

THE MARINE PRODUCTS
EXPORT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Government of India
Mahatma Gandhi Road, Cochin 682016

Compliments and Best Wishes

to

**DELEGATES OF THE ALL INDIA
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN
TRIVANDRUM**

From

**BHIMA & BROTHERS,
JEWELLERS AND DIAMOND MERCHANTS,
MULLACKAL, ALLEPPEY, KERALA**

Telephones : Office : 2288
Residence : 2311

*with the
compliments of*



PFIZER LIMITED

Pharmaceuticals — Animal Health Products — Pharmaceutical
Chemicals — Agrochemicals — Nutritional Products

Benson-1/PF-11

With best
compliments
from

CHINTHA PUBLISHERS

TRIVANDRUM

With best compliments

from

ENGINE VALVES LIMITED

MADRAS :: 16

**Manufacturers of valves for Internal
combustion engines.**

Toshiba

ANAND

IS:203



No other Battery has

UM 1

IS:203

UM 2

the mark

No other Battery has the 'op seal' either.

NOW!

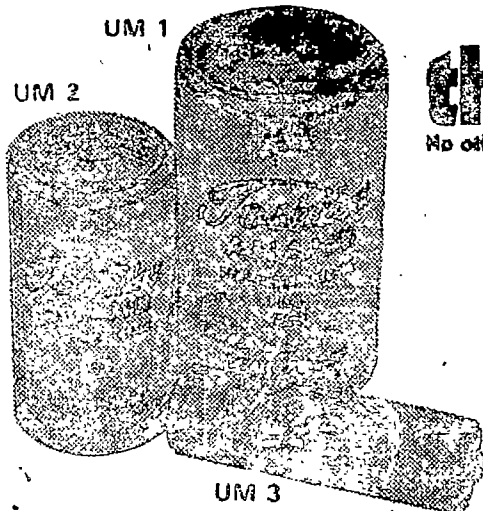
Toshiba

ANAND

THE ONLY BATTERY
WHICH HAS THE
I.S.I. MARK OF QUALITY.

THE ONLY BATTERY
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TEST
BEFORE BUYING.

TOSHIBA ANAND BATTERIES LTD.
REGD. OFFICE - XXXII/1080 M. G. ROAD,
COCHIN 682 011.
FACTORY: KALAMASSERY, KERALA.



UM 3

Authoritative interpretations of Government policies are of vital importance to decision-makers.

The Economic Times puts the challenges facing the nation in the right perspective.

By bringing clear analyses of the political roots of economic decisions.

Critical studies of industrial and social significance.

First-rate investigative reporting.

Editorials that are forthright.

Management studies.

Arts, Book Reviews and Theatre.

All this makes The Economic Times the vital newspaper for businessmen and politicians, junior and senior executives, technologists and students.

Get The Economic Times habit. It is the stepping stone to success.

Who says
politics and
business
won't mix?

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

— the newspaper that reflects social change

Published from Bombay and New Delhi

Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Bombay 400 001

7, Bahadur Shah Zaffar Marg, New Delhi



With best compliments from

REUNION ENGINEERING COMPANY PVT. LTD.

Please contact for

Manufacturing switch boards, control panels, light fittings, busbar trunkings, distribution boards;

Designing and installing overhead busbar trunking, substation equipment, lighting and power installation of factories, mills, buildings, etc; and

Supplying Siemens Tropodur cables, switchgears, motor & pumpsets, Dr. Beck varnish and thinners, Loadster MCBs. & isolators, M-Seal Kits and accessories; etc.

Office :

M.G. Road, Cochin 682011

Tel. No. 33738

Head Office: Bombay

Factory :

South Kalamassery,

Cochin 682022

Tel. No. 5508

Branches : Madras and
Ahmedabad

A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH

IN

SCIENTIFIC STORAGE

THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED. IT HAS BEEN NO MEAN TASK. IT REQUIRED DEDICATED SERVICE, SPECIALIST SKILL AND ATTENDANT FACILITIES

ALL THAT WE HAVE:

WE HAVE A NETWORK OF 65 WELL-EQUIPPED STORE HOUSES, SPREAD OVER THROUGHOUT THE STATE

WE ALSO UNDERTAKE:

Shipping clearance, Railway clearance, Transportation, Storage and distribution of foodgrains, CARE cargo, Fertilizers etc, etc.

Disinfestation of stock in the warehouses and also at party's own premises at very moderate rates.

Soil fumigation in the nurseries and gardens.

FOR ANY STORAGE PROBLEM - BANK ON US. WE WILL LOOK AFTER YOU. YES, IT WILL BE OUR PLEASURE.

KERALA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION

P. B. No. 1727

COCHIN - 682 016

Gram: KERWACOR

Phone : 31537
35069

Ten thousand years ago man moved towards civilization



Woman put him on the first steps that led to his great ascent

Leading anthropologists like Mason, Briffault, Keeler, Peake and Dorsey agree that woman initiated primitive man's shift towards civilization. Man moved away from the beast-like existence of forager and hunter as women evolved the art of cooking, domesticating animals, tilling the soil...

These were totally new innovations that demanded the highest quality of creative intelligence. They prompted primitive man, who had roamed the earth for a million years, to finally settle. It was a crucial decision for civilization would have been impossible for man on the move.

Woman influenced that decision by creatively

contributing towards a better life. People like to think that we at L&T are creative too. But, although we manufacture highly sophisticated equipment for every vital industry we wouldn't dare draw a comparison.

*Issued in the interest of
International
Women's Year*



LARSEN & TOUBRO LIMITED
P.O. Box 278, Bombay 400 038

With best compliments

from

HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED

BOMBAY

THE KERALA STATE CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.

A Scheduled Bank)

Head Office	: Overbridge Junction, Trivandrum-1.	Phone No.
Main Branch	: Overbridge Junction, Trivandrum-1.	2908, 3723
Regional Office	: Resmi, Chalappuram, Calicut-2.	
Our Branches	1. Statue Junction	62140
	2. Peroorkada	62734
	3. Medical College Junction	8235
	4. Karamana	4831
	5. Ernakulam (Near City Hospital, M. G. Road)	

ABOUT OURSELVES

* The Bank extends production and development credit to agriculturists for their farm operations and agro-based subsidiary occupations and working capital to small-scale industries, consumer stores, marketing and processing units in the co-operative sector.

WE OFFER

** We transact all types of banking business.

* Prompt and courteous service to our customers.

** Most modern deposit lockers for hire at moderate rental at our H.O.

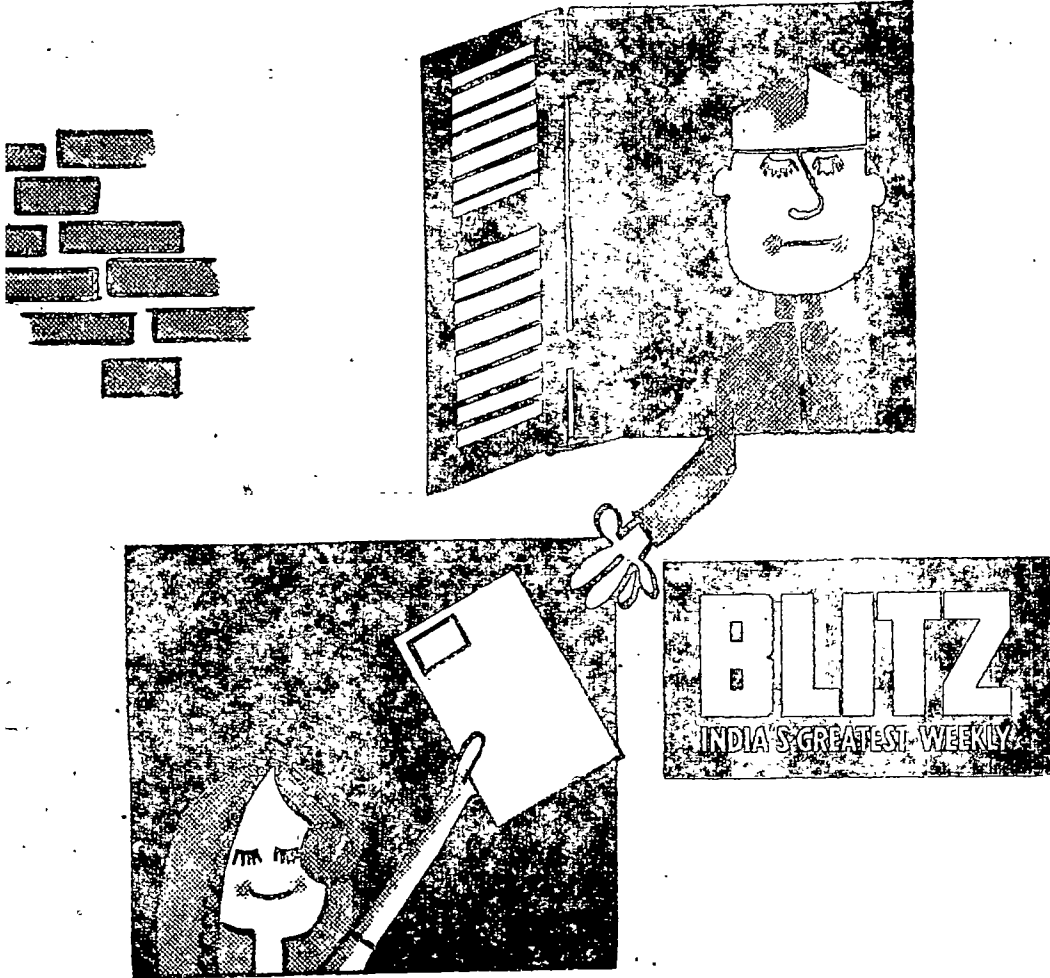
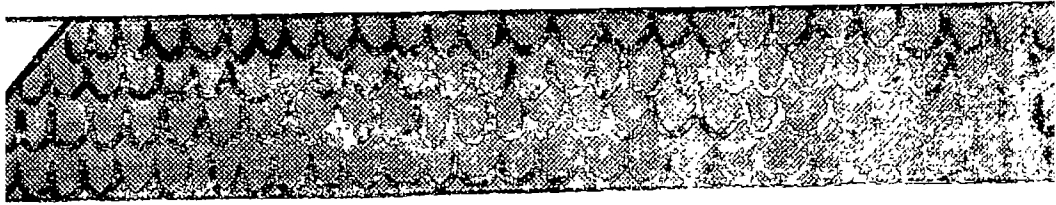
*** Reasonable rates of interest on your various types of deposits.
*** We allow minors over 12 years to open savings bank accounts in their names and operate the accounts, and 3 new attractive deposit schemes

'Surabhi'
'Vardhini &

Cash Certificates of different denominations.

For details please step in at our Head Office or Branches.

E. CHANDRASEKHARAN NAIR, B.Sc.B.L. C S. SUBRAMANIAN, M.Com., C.A.I.I.B.
(President) (Secretary):



**SOME MEN MARRIED NEIGHBOURHOOD GIRLS
BY BORROWING BLITZ EVERY WEEK !**

**KERALA STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION LIMITED**

RENDERS PROMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

**In setting up medium and large scale
industries in Kerala.**

**DISCOVER INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN KERALA
through**

**Kerala State Industrial Development
Corporation Limited**

**Vellayambalam
Post Box No. 105,
Trivandrum-1.
KERALA**

CHELUR

**the first choice of
Decision Makers and Discerning Buyers for
Choicest Office Equipment and
Dependable Service**

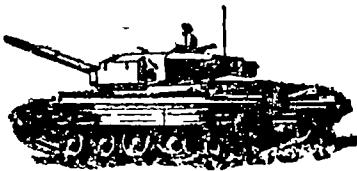
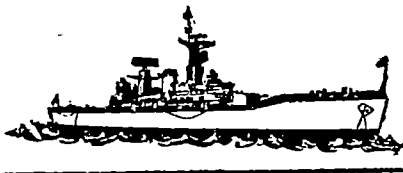
**Halda Typewriters, Facit Calculators, Adding Machines,
Superphone Intercom Telephones, Methodex Business
Systems, MEK Steel Racks, Mercury Steel Furniture,
Time Punching Clocks etc. etc.**

**CHELUR CORPORATION
Cochin 16**

Trivandrum 1

**CHELUR AGENCIES
Mangalore**

INDIANOIL SERVICE TO SERVICES



India's Defence Services, no doubt are our valued customers. But we do not look at it that way. As a leading public enterprise, we deem it our prime responsibility and our duty to rally round the Services and help keep round-the-clock vigil across the national frontiers.






Army, Navy or Air Force—Indianoil is there to meet all the requirements of petroleum products conforming to correct specifications wherever they are needed.

The recent Indo-Pakistan hostilities posed a challenge to provide the logistic support. Indianoilmen accepted the challenge and met it squarely, irrespective of the odds, risks and costs, thus earning the nation's gratitude for their efforts in war and no less in times of peace.







INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LIMITED

**CAN YOU
AFFORD TO
LOSE
THESE?**

jewellery  insurance policies  shares
and securities, fixed deposit receipts
annuity certificates  lottery  tickets
contracts, leases  and other legal documents



 tax records and other
 important  receipts
 diplomas, degrees, medals

These are things you cannot afford to lose or misplace! Rent a Bank of India Safe Deposit Locker today. It costs so little yet it ensures perfect safety, and what's more you'll have your peace of mind!

Bank of India



You have a future in this Star

With best wishes

from

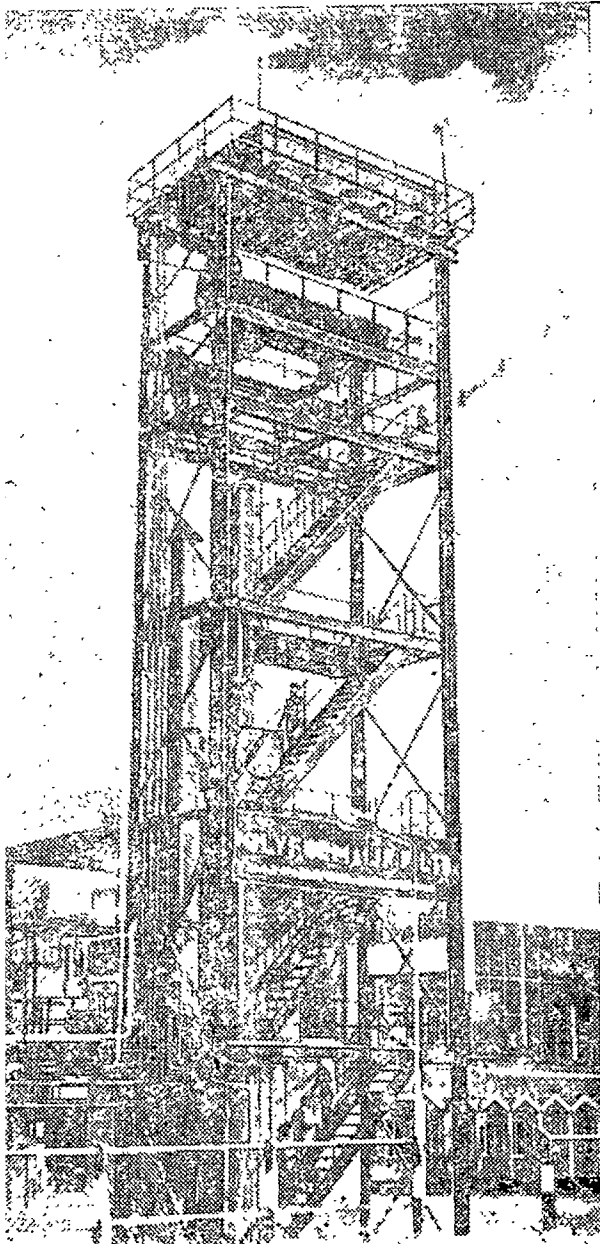
KELTRON

**KERALA STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION LIMITED**

Spearheading the revolution in Electronics

Central Marketing Organisation
Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd
24/263, Syrian Church Road,
TRIVANDRUM-695 001.

Telephone : 6024 1/60029
Telex : KELTRON TV. 243
Telegram : ELECTRONIC.



CHEMICAL PLANTS

from

CHEMECH

CHEMECH is well-known for over a decade for their expertise and experience in the field of Chemical Plant manufacture

CHEMECH undertake complete responsibility from design and fabrication to erection and commissioning of Chemical Plants for Pharmaceutical, Food and Dairy industries. And for Agro-industries. Mechanical dryers Par-boiling units seed drying plants etc.

CHEMECH's know how and capability include supply of plants for producing chemicals- Acetic Acid, Acetic Anhydride, Acetaldehyde, Ethyl Acetate, Ether from Ethyl Alcohol

Given below is the list of plants already commissioned by CHEMECH in various parts of our Country, proving CHEMECH's lead in this field

- 20 Alcohol Plants and
- Potable Liquor Plants
- 3 Glycerine Plants
- 3 Resin Plants
- 2 Gas holders
- 1 Acetic Acid Plant
- 1 Acetaldehyde Plant
- 2 Formaldehyde Plants
- 55 Mechanical Dryers
- 20 Parboiling Units
- 3 Seed Drying Units
- 1 Cattle-Feed Mixing Plant
- 1 Tannin Extraction Plant

FORMALDEHYDE PLANT FOR M/s POLYFORMALIN P. LTD., COCHIN.

CHEMECH

**CHEMECH ENGINEERS
PRIVATE LTD.**

16/3, Sterling Road, Madras-600034
Grams, CHEMDESIGN. Phone: 88604/5 Telex: 041-7147

Project Office: 10, Montiel Lane,
Egmore, Madras-600008 Phone: 88573 88606

Have you read these from Penguins?

THE FIRST SEX by Elizabeth G Davis – Rs. 15.00

THE SECOND SEX by Simone de Beauvoir—Rs. 30.00

ORIENT LONGMAN LIMITED

36 A, Mount Road, Madras 600002

BOMBAY CALCUTTA NEW DELHI BANGALORE HYDERABAD

Good Luck

Would come to

Anyone

Anytime

Anyday, UNAWARE

Let it be YOU

Let it be through

KERALA STATE LOTTERIES

issued by the directorate of state lotteries,

trivandrum, kerala 695001.

A THREE STAR WELCOME
FROM
***THE FINEST VEGETARIAN HOTELS
IN THE EAST***



HOTEL DĀSAPRAKĀSH

MADRAS 600 084

Grams : DASPRAKASH

Phone : 66 11 11

Telex : 041/637



HOTEL DĀSAPRAKĀSH

MYSORE-1

Grams : DASPRAKASH

Phone : 22821



HOTEL DĀSAPRAKĀSH

OOTACAMUND

Grams : DASPRAKASH

Phone : 2434/2435



DASAPRAKASH GROUP OF HOTELS

MADRAS

MYSORE

OOTY

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

KERALA

THE PACE-SETTER AND PIONEER THE FIRST INDIAN STATE

to implement revolutionary Land Reforms;
to distribute surplus land to the landless;
to introduce One Lakh Houses Scheme to the landless poor.

Now excels in

Record of devoted service

To the poor and the depressed

- * Special Recruitment Scheme secures full access to Harijans to Government service.
- * Special Employment Cell and Review Committee ensure reservation of jobs.
- * Separate Official Machinery safeguards interests of the tribal population.
- * Special consideration in land distribution to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- * Legislation on Bonded Labour System abolishes century-old slavery.
- * Alienation of land of the tribals prevented by law.
- * Harijan Development Corporation makes for the all-round development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

KERALA TAKES MORE STRIDES TOWARDS SOCIALISM

Public Relations Department, Kerala.

THE KERALA FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Announces the introduction of a new Scheme for financial assistance to Technocrats.

Any person who holds a Degree/Diploma in any branch of Engineering/Technology/Management or experience in industry is eligible for assistance.

SPECIAL FEATURES — Provides 90% of the cost of the Project.

Levies no application fees, but only a nominal registration fee.

MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE — Upto Rs Two lakhs for one technocrat and Three lakhs if more than one.

EASY REPAYMENT TERMS

LOW RATE OF INTEREST

LONG CREDIT PERIOD

For Details :

THE KERALA FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Head Office: Vellayambalam, Trivandrum-695001.

Telephones : 60319 & 62237.

Branch Offices : 1. Chittoor Road, Cochin-682011. Telephone : 33745.

2. Feroke Buildings, Kallai Road, Calicut, Telephone : 76719.

Sub Offices : 1. District Industries Office Buildings, Alleppey.

2. District Industries Office Buildings, Malappuram.

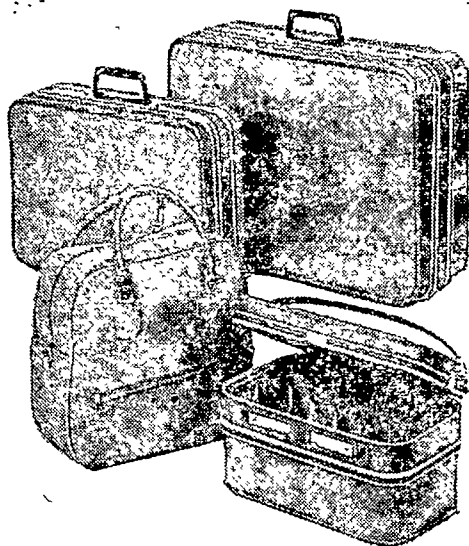
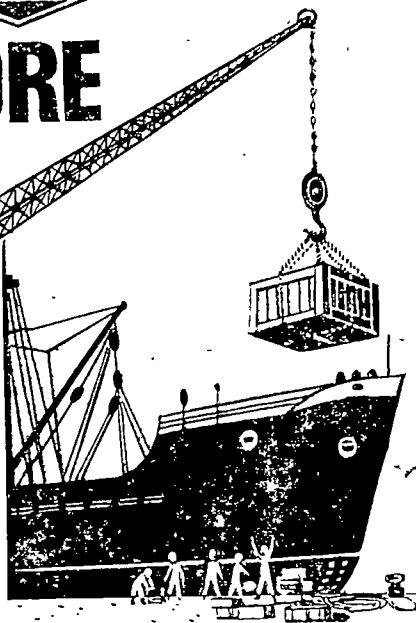
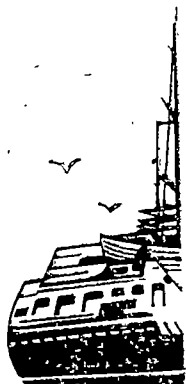
3. District Industries Office Buildings, Cannanore.

HERE ONE MORE GOAL!



THE INTERNATIONAL
SERVICE. YES. TIPTOP
BEGINS TO SERVE THE
FOREIGN COUNTRIES TOO!
THE PIONEER IN PLASTIC
WARES, SUIT CASES
TOURIST REQUIREMENTS
FANCY GOODS Etc

*Rush For Wise
Selection*



Manufacturers Importers
& Exporters.

**TIPTOP PLASTIC
INDUSTRIES**

KASHI CHETTY STREET
MADRAS-600 001
Phone: 34607, 21613

Branches & Show rooms :
MADRAS, BANGALORE
CALICUT, COIMBATORE
COCHIN, NELLORE, SALEM
& TRICHY.

SUNDARAM-CLAYTON LIMITED

Manufacturers of

Entire range of equipment for Compressed
Air-assisted Brake Systems and Full-air
Brake Actuation Systems for Commercial
Vehicles, Tractors, Trailers and Earth-Movers.

Registered Office

37 Mount Road
Madras 600006

Factory

Padi
Madras 600050

For Quality, Strength and Durability

SANKAR CEMENTS

THE INDIA CEMENTS LIMITED
175/1 MOUNT ROAD
MADRAS - 600002.

Factories : SANKARNAGAR, TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT
SANKARIDRUG, SALEM DISTRICT

With best compliments

from

ESKEYAR ENGINEERING CO (P) LTD

ENGINEERS TO CHEMICAL AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES

6B, Sullivans Garden Road, MADRAS - 600004

Phone: 76046, Grams: DESIGNESK, Telex: 041 - 7120

Welcome and best wishes

to the delegates

attending

THE ALL-INDIA CONFERENCE ON WOMEN
at Trivandrum

from

NAVAYUGA FILMS

FILM DISTRIBUTORS

VIJAYAWADA - GUNTAKAL - SECUNDERABAD

Published and edited by Jacob Eapen on behalf of the Indian School of Social
Sciences, Trivandrum-1, and printed by him at S B Press, Trivandrum-1.

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under No. R. N. 23844/72

Licensed to post without pre-payment under No. TV-2. Regd. No. KL/TV/52

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10 MAY 1975

Politics of psychoanalysis: *S C Varma*; Political economy of food, Part I: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Herostone worship in ancient south India: *N Vanamamalai*; Student movement at JNU: *Prakash Karat*; Note on transnational monopolies.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 11 JUNE 1975

Studies in the development of Indian capitalism: *N. Ram*; Political economy of food, Part II: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Jaya Prakash Narayan's politics: *S C Varma*; Notes on: Marxism and Indian sociology; The national sector and commanding heights; Communication on Marxism and quantum mechanics.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 12 JULY 1975

China and the undivided Communist Party of India: *Georges Kristoffel Lieten*; Sociology of conflict theory: *Manorama Savur*; Revolutionary violence in a people's war: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Note on foreign monopolies and the Indian drug industry; Communication on Marx, Samuelson and King.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1 AUGUST 1975

Theoretical aspects of the national question: *Prakash Karat*; Emergence of nationalism: *Irfan Habib*; National problems in India and pre-revolutionary Russia: *Ajit Roy*; Class character of the nationalist movement: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Regional development and the national question in north-east India: *S K Chaube, S Munsu and A Guha*; Rise and growth of the Bengali nationality: *Partha Chatterjee*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER

1975. South-east Asia—thirty years on: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Assam's language question in retrospect: *M Kar*; Sonthal problem in nineteenth-century Bengal: *Archana Mandal*; Report on: Christians for socialism; Notes on: Desabhimani study circles in Kerala; Medical representatives on the march.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3 OCTOBER 1975

Historical perspectives on ancient India: *M G S Narayanan*; Peasants and political power in Mexico: *Roger Bartra*; India's first irrigation company: *Sourin Bhattacharya*; Note on indigo planters, Ram Mohan Roy and the Charter Act of 1833.

Social Scientist

JANUARY

1976

42

Psychology of Political Violence □ Palestine
in Jesus' Time □ Colonial Culture □ United
States Foreign Policy of Interventionism
Lessons of Vietnamese Revolution
Neocolonialist Trade □ Indian Literature

Social Scientist

Editor

Jacob Eapen

Associate Editors

Mohan Thampi

P N Varughese

Editorial & Circulation

SOCIAL SCIENTIST

Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

INLAND

Annual : Rs 30
Half-yearly : Rs 15
Single Copy : Rs 3

FOREIGN

(In US dollars)

Sea Mail : Annual \$ 11

Air Mail : Annual \$ 20 (USA & Canada)

\$ 17 (Other countries)

(In pounds sterling)

£ 4.50

£ 6.00

Social Scientist

*Monthly Journal of the
Indian School of Social Sciences*

VOLUME 4 JANUARY
NUMBER 6 1976

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| Gopal Singh | 3 | Psychology of Political Violence |
| Francois Houtart | 14 | Palestine in Jesus' Time |
| Susantha Goonetilake | 25 | Colonial Culture |

NOTES

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| R L Walli | 41 | US Foreign Policy of Interventionism |
| Shingo Shibata | 49 | Lessons of the Vietnamese Revolution |
| G V Rao | 57 | Neocolonialist Aid and Trade |

BOOK REVIEWS

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----|--|
| Mohan Thampi | 62 | Aspects of Indian Literature |
| Jaganath Pathy | 66 | Ancient Society |
| Meena Gupta | 70 | Report of the Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceutical Industry |

Articles, notes and book reviews express the views of the authors and not necessarily of the editors or of the Indian School of Social Sciences.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr SUSANTHA GOONETILAKE is director of research, People's Bank, Sri Lanka.

MEENA GUPTA teaches economics at Daulat Ram College, Delhi University.

Rev Fr FRANCOIS HOUTART is professor of sociology at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium.

JAGANATH PATHY is research scholar at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

G V RAO is an economic analyst in Goa.

SHINGO SHIBATA is director of the Alice Herz Peace Fund, Tokyo.

GOPAL SINGH is assistant professor in the department of political science, Himachal Pradesh University, Simla.

Dr MOHAN THAMPI is reader in English, Banāras Hindu University.

Dr R L WALLI is in the department of political science, School of Social Sciences, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

GOPAL SINGH

Psychology of Political Violence

POLITICAL VIOLENCE is episodic in the history of most organized political communities and chronic in many. No country in the world has been free of it even for the span of a generation. The prevalence of violence in the realm of politics particularly poses the cardinal problem: is man violent by nature or do circumstances make him so? Is he inherently aggressive or aggressive only in response to specific social conditions? In the Hobbesian view, the inescapable legacy of human nature is the "life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". This view has been given credence recently by ethnologists, whose study of animals in their habitats led them to conclude that the aggressive drive in animals is innate, ranking with the instincts of hunger, sex and fear.¹

But most psychologists and social scientists do not regard aggression as fundamentally spontaneous or instinctive nor does their evidence support such a view. Rather they regard most aggression, including violence, as sometimes an emotional response to socially induced frustration, and sometimes a dispassionate, learned response evoked by specific situations.² Nature provides us only with the capacity for violence. It is social circumstance that determines whether and how we exercise that capacity.³ Psychological evidence suggests that men have a capacity but not a need for aggression; other evidence points to the patterns of social circumstances

in which men exercise their capacity collectively.⁴ Political violence is not an ineluctable manifestation of human nature. It is a specific kind of response to specific conditions of social existence. The capacity, but not need, for violence appears to be biologically inherent in man.⁵

While the concept of aggression has received extensive elaboration in psychology, the frustration-anger-aggression hypothesis seems to engage the American theorists most.⁶ There is a variety of theoretical writings on the sources of aggression, some of it speculative, some of it based on empirical research. However, some psychological theories about the sources of aggressive behaviour can be disregarded at the outset. There is for instance little support for pseudo-psychological assertions that most or all revolutionaries or conspirators are deviants, fools or maladjusted.⁷ Psychodynamic explanations of the revolutionary personality may be useful for microanalysis of particular events but contribute relatively little to general theories of collective violence.⁸

Aggressive Impulse

Ted Robert Gurr categorizes the psychological assumptions about the generic sources of human aggression into three: (a) that aggression is solely instinctive; (b) that it is solely learned and (c) that it is an innate response activated by frustration.⁹ The instinct theories of aggression represented among others by Freud's qualified attribution of the impulse to destructiveness or a death instinct, and by Lorenz's view of aggression as a survival-enhancing instinct, assume that most or all men have within them an autonomous source of aggressive impulses. Although there is no definitive support for the assumption, its advocates, including Freud and Lorenz, have often applied it to the explanation of collective as well as individual aggression.¹⁰ This assumption as we have already stated is evident in Hobbes's characterization of men in the state of nature, and perhaps implicit in Neiburg's recent concern for the people's capacity for outraged, uncontrolled, bitter and bloody violence,¹¹ but plays no significant role in contemporary theories of civil strife.

The second assumption that violence is a learned response, rationally chosen and dispassionately employed, is common to a number of recent theoretical approaches to collective conflict. Among theorists of revolution, Johnson repeatedly speaks of civil violence as purposive, as a form of behaviour intended to disorient the behaviour of others, thereby bringing about the demise of a hated social system.¹² Timasheff regards revolution as a residual, even an expedient resorted to when other ways of overcoming tensions have failed.¹³ Parsons attempt to fit political violence into the framework of social interaction theory, treating the resort to force as a way of acting chosen by the actors for purposes of deterrence, punishment or symbolic demonstration of capacity to act.¹⁴ Schelling represents those conflict theorists who explicitly assume rational behaviour and interdependence of adversaries' decisions in all types of conflicts.¹⁵

The third and the most important psychological assumption is that

of response to frustration. The frustration-anger-aggression theory is more systematically developed and has substantially more empirical support than the other two theories. The most influential formulation of frustration-anger-aggression theory was proposed by Dollard¹⁶ and his colleagues at Yale in 1939. The basic postulate is that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and that the existence of frustration leads to some form of aggression. The primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be the frustration-aggression mechanism. The anger induced by frustration is a motivating force that disposes man to aggression. If frustrations are sufficiently prolonged or sharply felt, aggression is quite likely to occur.¹⁷ So in its most basic and fundamental formulation, the frustration-aggression hypothesis maintains that aggression is the result of frustration. Frustration itself is defined as the thwarting or interference with the attainment of goals, aspirations or expectations, and aggression as behaviour designed to injure, physically or otherwise those toward whom it is directed. The disposition to respond aggressively when frustrated is part of man's biological make-up; there is a biologically inherent tendency in men and animals to attack the frustrating agent.¹⁸

Analogous concepts used by contemporary American theorists are too many to be stated here. We can mention only a few. Lerner described the gap between what people want and what they get as "frustrating" and suggests revolutionary consequences.¹⁹ Crozier says that one element common to all rebels is frustration, defined as "inability to do something one badly wants to do, through circumstances beyond one's control."²⁰ Four analogous concepts however are more important and need detailed analysis.

Relative Deprivation

Relative deprivation is defined by Ted Robert Gurr as "a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities."²¹ Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining and maintaining, given the social means available to them. Societal conditions that increase the average level or intensity of expectations without increasing capabilities increase the intensity of discontent. Societal conditions that decrease man's average value positions without decreasing their value expectations similarly increase deprivation, hence the intensity of discontent.²² The emphasis of the hypothesis is on the perception of deprivation people may be subjectively deprived of, with reference to their expectation even though an objective observer might not judge them to be in want. Similarly the existence of what the observer judges to be abject poverty or "absolute deprivation" is not necessarily thought to be unjust or irremediable by those who experience it.²³

Gurr's hypothesis is that the potential for collective violence varies

strongly with the intensity and the scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity.²⁴ Deprivation-induced discontent is a general spur to action. Psychological theory and group conflict theory both suggest that the greater the intensity of discontent, the more likely is violence. The outlines of Gurr's hypothesis can be sketched briefly: the primary causal sequence in political violence is, first, the development of discontent, second, the politicization of that discontent, and finally, its actualization in violent action against political objects and actors. The great majority of acts of collective violence in recent decades have had at least some political objects; the more intense such violent acts are, the more likely they are to be focused primarily or exclusively on the political system. Intense discontent is quite likely to be politicized discontent and is a necessary condition for the resort to violence in politics. But however intense and focused the impetus to violence is, its actualization is strongly influenced by the patterns of coercive control and institutional support in the political community. Political violence is of the greatest magnitude and most likely to take the form of internal war, if regimes and those who oppose them exercise approximately equal degree of coercive control and command similar and relatively high degrees of institutional support in society.²⁵

Alarmist Foreboding and Systematic Frustration

Davies attributes revolutionary outbreaks to the frustration which results from a short-term decline in achievement following a long-term increase that generated expectations about continuing increase.²⁶ Davies in his analysis of several revolutions, concludes that contrary to Marxian expectations, revolutions do not occur during periods of prolonged abject or worsening situations of social deprivation. Neither does the evidence sustain the insight of de Tocqueville and others, that revolutions are perpetrated during periods of relative prosperity and improvement. Instead Davies postulates a J-curve of socio-economic development, whereby revolution occurs in social systems in which social well-being has been continually raised for an extended period of time, followed by an abrupt or sharp setback, with the certainty of social expectations being reinforced during the period of continued socio-economic development. The sharp reversal in social fortunes creates an intolerable discrepancy between achievement and expectations. It is also possible that the unexpected reversal in attainment creates an alarmist expectation of continued severe decreases in levels of achievement. Such a fear for the future, possibly an exaggerated fear, motivates present actions.

The concept of frustration is often thought more appropriate to individual than to social circumstances. Feierabands and Nesvold believe that the notion of "systematic frustration"²⁷ makes the concept applicable to the analysis of aggregate, violent political behaviour within social systems. They define systematic frustration with reference to three criteria: (1) as frustration interfering with the attainment and maintenance

PSYCHOLOGY OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

of social goals, aspirations and values; (2) as frustration simultaneously experienced by members of a social aggregate and hence also complex social systems, and (3) as frustration or strain that is produced within the structures and processes of a social system. Systematic frustration is thus frustration that is experienced simultaneously and collectively within societies.

Guided by this definition, Feierabands and Nesvold adopt two basic propositions from the frustration-aggression hypothesis and restate them with reference to social systems: (1) violent political behaviour is instigated by systematic frustration; and (2) systematic frustration may stem, among other circumstances of the social system, from specific characteristics of social change.

Four general hypotheses figure in their theory: (1) systematic frustration at any given time is a function of the discrepancy between present social aspirations, expectations, on the one hand, and social achievements on the other; (2) In addition, present estimates or expectations of future frustrations or satisfactions are also responsible for levels of present frustration or satisfaction; (3) Uncertainties in social expectations in themselves increase the sense of systematic frustration. Ambiguity as to whether the future will bring disaster or salvation should be considered a distressing experience, adding to the present sense of frustration. Only in case of disaster is certainty likely to be judged as more frustrating than uncertainty; (4) Conflicting aspirations and conflicting expectations provide yet another source of systematic frustration. Conflict is a systematically frustrating circumstance. Conflict is considered as a specific case of frustration in which an individual's alternative motives, aspirations and expectations work at cross purposes, blocking one another.

Tensions of Transition

The causes of violence and instability in the emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, argues Huntington,²⁶ may be found in the lag in the development of viable political institutions on the one hand and social and economic change on the other. Huntington like Feieraband divides societies into three: traditional, transitional and modern. While the first and the last are less prone to political violence and instability, the transitional societies suffer from political violence every now and then. Revolutionary upheavals, military coups, insurrections, guerrilla warfares, and assassinations are a common feature of transitional societies. Huntington does not agree with the thesis that it is poverty and economic and social backwardness which cause violence in society which even Mc Namara believed, "There is an irrefutable relationship between violence and economic backwardness... all pervasive poverty undermines government of any kind. It is a persistent cause of instability which makes democracy well-nigh impossible to practise."²⁷ Huntington argues that it is not poverty and backwardness which cause political violence, rather it is the desire to be rich and modern which breed violence:

If poor countries appear to be unstable, it is not because they are poor but because they are trying to be rich. A purely traditional society would be ignorant, poor and stable... It is precisely the devolution of modernization throughout the world which increases the prevalence of violence around the world... causes of violence lay with the modernization rather than with the backwardness. Wealthier nations tend to be more stable than those less wealthy but the poorest nations, those at the bottom of the international economic ladder, tend to be less prone to violence and instability than those countries just above them.⁸⁰

He goes on to say that in modernizing countries, violence, unrest and extremism are more often found in the wealthier parts of the country than in the poorer sections. In analyzing the situation in India, Huntington quotes Houselitz and Weiner who found that

the correlation between political stability and economic development is poor or even negative. Under British rule political violence was most prevalent in the 'economically most highly developed provinces' and after independence violence remained more likely in the industrialized and urban centres than in the more backward and underdeveloped areas of India.⁸¹

Strains of Instability: Gap Hypothesis

According to Huntington some measure of economic growth is necessary to make instability possible: "The simple poverty thesis falls down because people who are really poor are too poor for politics and too poor for protest. They are indifferent, apathetic, and lack exposure to the media and other stimuli which would arouse their aspirations in such manner as to galvanize them into political activity."⁸²

"The abjectly poor, too," Eric Hoffer observed, "stand in awe of the world around them and are not hospitable to change... there is thus a conservatism of the destitute as profound as the conservatism of the privileged, and the former is as much a factor in the perpetuation of a social order as the latter."⁸³ Poverty itself is a barrier to instability. "Those who are concerned about the immediate goal of the next meal are not apt to worry about the grand transformation of society. Just as social mobilization is necessary to provide the motive for instability, so also some measure of economic development is necessary to provide the means for instability."⁸⁴

But at another extreme, Huntington says, among other countries which have reached a relatively high level of economic development, a high rate of economic growth is compatible with political stability. Economically developed countries are more stable and have higher rates of growth than economically less developed countries. "Thus, the relationship between the rate of economic growth and political instability varies with the level of economic development. At low levels, a positive relationship exists, at medium levels no significant relations and at high levels a

negative relationship.³⁵

In the end Huntington states what he calls the "Gap Hypothesis", which is something akin to Feierabands's theory of social change and violence and Ted Robert Gurr's concept of relative discrepancy and political violence. Social mobilization is much more destabilizing than economic development. The gap between these two forms of change furnished some measure of the impact of modernization on political stability. Urbanization, literacy, education, mass media, all expose the traditional man to new forms of life, new standards of enjoyment, new possibilities of satisfaction. These experiences break the cognitive and attitudinal barriers of the traditional culture and promote new levels of aspirations and wants. The ability of a transitional society to satisfy these new aspirations, however, increases much more slowly than the aspirations themselves. Consequently a gap develops between aspiration and expectation, want formation and want satisfaction, or the aspirations function and the level of living function. This gap generates social frustration and dissatisfaction. In practice, the extent of the gap provides a reasonable index to political instability. Social frustration leads to demands on government and the expansion of political participation to enforce those demands. Political backwardness of the country in terms of political institutionlization, moreover, makes it difficult if not impossible for the demands upon the government to be expressed through legitimate channels and to be moderated and aggregated within the political system. Hence the sharp increase in political participation gives rise to political instability and violence.

Huntington closes his thesis with his conviction that fully modernized and economically developed countries have little instability and violence: "the sharp difference between the transitional and modern countries demonstrates the thesis that modernity means stability and modernization instability."³⁶ And the ideal model of modernity and prosperity in his mind is America.

Collective Bewilderment

Closely related to the Huntington hypothesis is the Feierabands-Nesvold hypothesis³⁷ that with the process of modernization and social change, political violence is closely associated. But unlike Huntington they say social changes are of two types. Firstly that which has beneficial and pacifying social consequences: if social change is perceived as bringing gratification and if it fulfills aspiration there is no reason to expect social crises in its wake. On the contrary, they may have a stabilizing effect on the political order. Secondly change which brings with it social circumstances that breed discontent and strain: the result of the social discontent and strain is protest movements, turmoil and violence. "Given these contradictory insights, the idea of change alone is not sufficient to explain the occurrences of violent political behaviour... The blanket assertion that change breeds violence is too simplistic."³⁸

Feierabands and Nesvold state their hypothesis like this: massive change that moves people physically into new environments exposes their minds to new ideas and casts them in new and unfamiliar roles is very likely to create collective bewilderment. This bewilderment may find expression in turmoil and social violence.³⁹ And they derive the same conclusion as Huntington:

Political violence is associated with the transitional process... Nations may be classified into three groups—modern, traditional and modernizing. The latter are passing through the transitional stage from traditional society to modernity. Generally, this period of transition is regarded as one that entails an inordinate amount of strain, tension and crisis.⁴⁰

The main argument of their hypothesis is that members of transitional societies aspire to the benefits of modernity, yet modern goals may be blocked by the values inherent in traditional society.⁴¹ Any modicum of modernity introduced into traditional society will conflict with its traditions. The farther the process of transition progresses, the more likely and more intense the conflicts between modern and established patterns. The midpoint, of transitional process is the highest intensity of conflict characterized by a high incidence of violent activity. It is because at this midpoint accomplishment of modernity equals those of tradition and the drive towards modernity is offset by the contradictory and equal attraction of traditional ways. This is the stage of the most intense struggle.

Diversionist Intent

The American theories of etiology of political violence are faulty and misleading. The flood of literature emanating from the United States on modernization, violence and revolution is meant to divert the attention of the youth of the emerging nations of the "Third World" from the real causes of violence and revolution which are poverty, inequality and exploitation. American social scientists are recruited by the White House, the CIA and various foundations to churn out jargons and theories to confuse the peoples of the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America regarding the causes of violence and revolution and thereby to weaken all other theories, particularly the Marxist-Leninist theory.⁴²

The frustration-anger-aggression hypotheses may find application in the case of individuals but not in the case of societies. American theorists apply these theses to societies and nowhere do they mention what Marx, Lenin and Mao have said about the causes of violence and revolution. Actually American prophets pose modernization as an alternative to revolution. They think that modernization of political institutions and processes can be independent of economic modernization,⁴³ and that a change in relations of production is not a precondition for modernization. Modernization provides an ideological alternative to the theorists of American imperialism and a critique of the revolutionary Marxist world-view.

Marx also accepted modernization as an integral part of the

revolutionary process. But Marx's concept of modernization fundamentally differs from its western variety. Marx held that in order to be successful, modernization has to be achieved not purely by political or administrative reform but predicated upon a structural change in socio-economic relations.⁴⁴ The conspicuous aspect of modernization and change is social revolution. It is a change in depth.⁴⁵ Where there is no change there is no history.⁴⁶ Political modernization is like changing the roof of a building leaving the pillars of the old structure intact. But in Marxian terminology "not only the death of the old order but the birth of a new order is needed,"⁴⁷ because "revolution is a product inevitably of some deep-seated irrationality or incoherence in the existing arrangements of society."⁴⁸

The Huntington-Feierabands-Nesvold thesis that violence and instability are at a peak in transitional society and that modern and traditional societies are comparatively free from violence is also open to criticism. If America is a modern polity, why is there greater violence in that country than in India, a transitional polity? Why do more political murders take place in America than in India? Even in the most traditional countries of Africa and Latin America violence is as dominant as in transitional countries. Tribal and feudal violence and military coups are a daily occurrence. The wave of violence which swept the so-called modernized countries of Europe and America (student violence, particularly) between 1968 and 1970 falsifies the Huntington hypothesis that modern societies are free from instability and violence. The student uprising in France during General de Gaulle's time also clearly contradicts this hypothesis.

Institutional and Revolutionary Violence

Huntington's hypothesis that the poor are too poor for politics or protest and they protest only when they are taught so-called modern values⁴⁹ is rather fantastic. It is the poor who are most prone to violence and constitute the most potent revolutionary force as they have "nothing to lose but their chains." What is needed is to convince them that they are poor because they have been exploited by the rich for ages and that their lot can be improved if they take up arms against their exploiters and liquidate them. After all, revolution through violence did take place in comparatively backward and traditional countries like Cuba and China. Once the masses are enlightened and apprised of the real causes of their misery and poverty, they take to arms and fight to the finish. The history of communist movements in Russia, China, Vietnam and Cuba is a clear testimony to this fact.

However, this is not saying that there is no political violence in socialist societies in Russia, China, Cuba and elsewhere. The emphasis is that there is much less violence here than in the bourgeois-democratic states. Till the goal of a classless and stateless society is achieved, violence is bound to operate because the state is, as Marx said, an agency of exploitation of the proletariat in a bourgeois democracy and even after

the revolution, the "class enemy" dies hard. Most of the causes of exploitation and hence of violence are eliminated but not completely in proletarian dictatorship. The state with all its paraphernalia—the military, the police and the bureaucracy—still exists and hence violence also will continue.

Thus exploitation, poverty and inequality are the primary and root causes of violence in society and politics, and other causes such as revenge, lust for power, instinct for domination and ambition are only secondary by-products. The more the exploitation, the more intense will be violence. The basic forces behind exploitation are the dominant socio-economic groups in society. The political apparatus is controlled by the dominant groups which in order to realize or maintain their interests use the various instrumentalities at their disposal. Consequently exploitation is perpetuated through the institutionalization of the exploitative apparatus in the form of political structure. It is the institutionalized nature of exploitation that brings forth various forms of organized group and mass violence, to preserve the concretization of dominant interests. Most often the ignorant and exploited masses are themselves used as tools by the dominant socio-economic groups for the furtherance of their vested interests. If the exploited are made politically conscious of the situation they can be taught the use of revolutionary violence to be turned against the exploiters.

¹ Konard Lorenz, *On Aggression*, New York 1966; and Robert Andrey, *The Territorial Imperative*, New York 1966.

² Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis*, New York 1962, and Ashley Montague (ed.), *Man and Aggression*, New York 1968.

This assumption underlies almost all the studies in the volume entitled *The History of Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspective*, Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, (eds). Washington 1969, and also in Gurr's book *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton, 1970.

³ Graham and Gurr, *op.cit.*, p 802.

⁴ Gurr, *op. cit.*, p ix.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 317.

⁶ For an early classic theoretical statement of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, see John Dollard, *Frustration and Aggression*, New Haven 1939.

⁷ Riezler Kurt, "On the Psychology of Modern Revolution", *Social Research*, September 1943, pp 320-36; portions of Eric Hoffer's *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, New York 1951, and Donald J Goodspeed, *The Conspirators: A Study of the Coup d'etat*, New York 1962.

⁸ A recent study of this type is E Victor Wolfenstein's *The Revolutionary Personality: Lenin, Trotsky, Gandhi*, Princeton 1967.

⁹ Gurr, *op. cit.*, pp 31-33.

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, John Riviers (trans.) London 1930; Konard Lorenz, *op. cit.*, ch. 13 and 14.

¹¹ H L Nieburg, "The Threat of Violence and Social Change", *American Political Science Review*, vol 61, December 1962, p 870. Also see his *Political Violence, the Behavioural Process*, New York 1961.

¹² Chalmer Johnson, *Revolutionary Changes*, Boston 1966, pp 12-13.

¹³ Timasheff, *War and Revolution*, New York 1965, p 154.

- 14 Talcott Parsons, "Some Reflections on the Place of Force in Social Process," Harry Eckstein (ed.), *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*, New York 1964, pp 34-36.
- 15 Thomas C Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge 1960.
- 16 John Dollard *op. cit.*; also see Elton D McNeil, "Psychology and Aggression", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol 3, June 1959, pp 195-294.
- 17 Gurr, *op. cit.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, p 33.
- 19 Daniel Lerner, "Toward a Communication Theory of Modernization: A Set of Considerations", in Lucian W Pye (ed.), *Communication and Political Development*, Princeton 1963, pp 327-50.
- 20 Brian Crozier, *The Rebels: A Study of Postwar Insurrections*, London 1960, pp 15-16.
- 21 Gurr, *op. cit.*, p 13.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 *Ibid.*, p 24.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp 13-14.
- 26 James C Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution", *American Sociological Review*, vol 27, February 1962, pp 5-19. Also "The J-Curve of Rising and Declining Satisfaction as a Cause of Some Great Revolutions and a Continued Rebellion", in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, (eds.), *op. cit.*
- 27 *History of Violence in America, op. cit.*, ch 18, pp 635-8.
- 28 Samuel P Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven 1968, pp 39-50
- 29 Speech by Robert S McNamara, Montreal, Quebec, 18 May 1966, *New York Times*, 19 May 1966, p 11.
- 30 Huntington, *op. cit.*, p 41.
- 31 Bert F Hoselitz, and Myron Weiner, "Economic Development and Political Stability in India", *Dissent*, vol 8, Spring 1961, p 173.
- 32 Huntington, *op. cit.*, p 52.
- 33 Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, New York 1951, p 17.
- 34 Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*, p 43.
- 37 *History of Violence in America, op. cit.*, pp 634-77.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p 634.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Ibid.*, p 645. Also Lucian W Pye, *Aspects of Political Development*, Boston, 1966.
- 41 David E Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, Chicago 1965.
- 42 Judith C Coburn, "Asian Scholars and Government", in Friedman and Seldon. (eds.) *America's Asia*, Pantheon, 1971, throws light on how American social scientists are recruited by the White House, CIA and the Foundations to produce biased literature on Third World countries. The USA to some extent has been successful in its mission in India. See also Noam Chomsky, *At War with Asia*, Collins, 1971.
- 43 Huntington, *op. cit.*, This is the theme of the whole book. See also Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, Bombay 1970, pp 232-3.
- 44 Carr, *What is History?* Quoted by Randhir Singh, *Reason, Revolution and Political Theory*, New Delhi 1967, p 134.
- 45 Friedman and Seldon, (eds.), *op. cit.*, p 139.
- 46 Randhir Singh, *op. cit.*, p 141.
- 47 Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, quoted by Randhir Singh, *ibid.*, p 143
- 48 Randhir Singh, *ibid.*, p 141.
- 49 Americans taught modern values to the Vietnamese for about twenty years and what has been the outcome is obvious to all.

FRANCOIS HOUTART

Palestine in Jesus' Time

ASIA HAS experienced a special type of feudalism, the Asiatic mode of production. It is characterized by the peasants living in highly organized communities centred on kinship relationships with a very strong internal cohesion; while the state, directed by princes or kings, appropriated the surplus by intervening in production mainly by the expedient of organizing irrigation. In nearly every case, this was the prevalent model in the rice-growing areas.

On the other hand, in West Asia (Middle East) where irrigation was not necessary as the population did not depend on rice, a somewhat different mode of production developed. It is called the sub-Asiatic mode of production. These regions were characterized by perpetual wars as they lay on the great communication routes between the East and the West, and between the great empires of Babylon and Egypt. They consisted, for most of the time, of kingdoms with martial aristocracies. This likewise caused the state to requisition a large part of the surplus produced by the people from agriculture as well as from trade to finance the wars. The Roman Empire developed according to another social type with a mode of production based on slave labour, due to the intensive development of maritime trade. For this reason society needed a very large number of productive forces to bring about

trade expansion. This was what brought about the emergence of slavery, an outstanding characteristic of empires around the shores of the Mediterranean. Moreover, the idea of private property, which was later developed in Roman law, had its origin in this mode of production.

Palestine, after the exile of the people of Israel to Babylon, was always subjugated by the empires of Persia and Rome, even as it was dominated internally by the wealthy landowning class. In the second century BC, at the time of the hellenizing process, the region witnessed the revolt of the Machabees. In 63 BC, the Roman Empire under Pompey gained mastery over the whole region and integrated Palestine's economic production into the trade of the empire.

Palestine in this epoch was divided into two distinct geographic regions. Judaea, a mountainous region around Jerusalem and its Temple, was economically characterized by a sub-Asiatic mode of production. The soil was arid and dry, olives and fruits were cultivated, and rearing of sheep and goats was widespread. Galilee, the other region, was traversed by two great trade routes, one leading from Damascus to the sea, and the other from Damascus to Jerusalem. This was a very fertile stretch of country, a characteristic of which was large properties given to the cultivation of corn or the rearing of big herds of cattle. There were fishermen along the seacoast and on the lakes. Foreign merchants exerted strong influence in the area which gave rise to one of the characteristics of Galilee, that of being a land of mixed blood and as such regarded as impure with regard to the Jewish people (*St Matthew* iv. 13: land of the Gentiles; people that lived in darkness). Galilee was also the place where numerous peasant revolts, particularly that of the Zealots, originated.

Roman Presence

From the point of view of social geography, there was a vast difference between the villages on the one hand, which subsisted as self-sufficient entities according to a social model of the clannic type and on the other hand, the highly developed towns in Judaea, particularly Jerusalem, with stratified societies.

The dominion of the Roman Empire had been established in several ways. It began with economic domination exercised by exactions which aimed at absorbing the surplus produced in Palestine to the Roman centre. In the first place, this drainage was carried out officially through the different kinds of taxes: about 6,000,000 denarii (1 denarius = 1 day's work rendered by a labourer) were transferred each year by the expedient of the *tributum* (a personal tax aggregating a fourth of the harvest); the *annona* (a tax in kind or in service for the army) and the *publicum* (rates and taxes). Further, there was also an unofficial levy which the Roman officials or their Palestinian allies raised.

The domination was also political, exercised through intermediaries recruited from among the dominating classes in Israel and the "Romanized" officials. The following pyramid can be discerned: from the political

point of view, there was first of all the Procurator of Judaea who was a Roman and resided at Cesarea (probably so as not to be too visible at Jerusalem), but who came to the city at the time of the great festivals. It was he who nominated the High Priest, choosing him from among one of the four dominant families in the society of that epoch. As for Galilee, power was exercised by the Roman Legate of Syria through King Herod Antipas.

The Roman power indirectly controlled the big landowners and the aristocracy, by reason of the fact that it arrogated to itself the power arbitrarily to dispossess people of their property rights. The interest of this class lay in collaborating with the Roman power.

Lastly came a series of intermediary officials, directly appointed by the Roman power, and generally recruited from the elders of the Sanhedrin (Upper Council) and from the great families. The publicans were recruited from the lower levels of society and had the responsibility of gathering the taxes.

Military domination was secured by the presence of the Roman army in Palestine; it was generally recruited in Syria and from amongst the non-Jews of Palestine. This army was quartered along the coasts.

Town and Country

There was a similarity of interests between the Roman exploitation and local exploitation the latter particularly by means of the very numerous contributions made to the Temple. The effect of these two phenomena together was the impoverishment of the small peasants.

The urban workers and the lower middle class likewise suffered from the economic consequences of this double exploitation. This showed itself particularly in the high rate of inflation and unemployment, and the appearance of armed bands of brigands in the rural districts. On the other hand, the landowners benefited from the rise in agricultural prices, while the upper middle class drew its profits from Jerusalem as a centre of consumption. So the opposition in between the three large social groups, the popular class, the lower middle class and the upper middle class was objectively and sometimes subjectively very strong.

There was a wide gap between the rural and urban regions. In the villages, production was generally organized on the basis of small landed properties, combined with a part of the common land owned by the village communities. These were generally self-sufficient from the point of view of agricultural production. There were small artisans with whom trade was generally established on the basis of barter. One could not speak of a class society in this village life. However, with the establishment of the Roman Empire a continued pauperization was in evidence. Not only did the Palestinian state (the Temple) drain off a part of the surplus—the didrachma for the Temple, tithes for the clergy, expenditure incurred by families and individuals for the festivals at Jerusalem—but the Roman colonizer added to this his demands on the surplus.

The big landholdings, which in Galilee were used for raising corn and cattle and in Judaea for olives, fruit and the rearing of sheep or goats, were managed indirectly by the big landowners who generally lived in the towns where they were associated with the urban economy and the big international merchants. These landowners lived within the compass of the money economy and even the agricultural labourers were paid at least partly in cash.

Urban Economy and Social Strata

In the urban milieu we can distinguish three sectors of economic activity: production, distribution and consumption. From the point of view of production, artisans worked at producing textiles, food, perfumes, jewellery and at construction. A certain number of these sectors were very important for the pilgrims who came up to Jerusalem each year. There were also the labourers who worked mainly in the sector of construction. It must not be forgotten that the Temple had been rebuilt between 20 BC, and AD 62 and that kings and local aristocrats as well as Roman officials had palaces built for themselves. It has been estimated that in AD 60 there were about 18000 labourers in Jerusalem alone.

For the distribution of goods, on the one hand were the big merchants who owned slaves and traded in raw materials and agricultural products: they developed connections with traders who passed through these regions, linking the great empires. On the other hand, there were the small merchants who were often artisans themselves or belonged to the same social group.

Finally from the point of view of consumption, it could be said that the Temple was the centre of this economic function. The gifts from the Jews of the Diaspora, the taxes, the revenue from the sale of sacrificial offerings (monopolized by one of the four families from which the High Priest was chosen) and from landed properties all poured into the Temple, which became the fountainhead of economic distribution by virtue of the fact that it possessed the treasury. In fact the Temple fulfilled at one and the same time the functions of what we would today call the Central Bank, the Stock Exchange and the fiscal authority of the state.

The social system of Palestine was rather complex, for not only did it correspond to a class society divided by economic factors but it was traversed by other forms of social stratification inherited from previous situations, particularly the clannish societies.

The economic system allowed a distinction to be made between rural and urban societies, and the same distinction can be made from the point of view of the social system, that is, the position occupied by the social groups in the relations of production. In the rural areas there were the following groups: the big landowners (generally absentee) the small landowners, the artisans, the labourers and the slaves.

In the urban areas, a triple classification can be noted in the upper

middle class: the priestly aristocracy, composed of the four families from whom the Procurator chose the High Priest; the big merchants, and the high officials. The two last-named categories formed the secular aristocracy. Then followed the lower middle class, composed of artisans, small tradesmen, the ordinary officials, laymen or priests, and the Levites. Lower down, there were the labourers, generally attached to the Temple, and a number of slaves. Finally, there existed a marginal proletariat, not integrated into the economic circuit and often composed of persons who were excluded from the organic social set-up for reasons other than economic.

And it is here that we need to enquire into two other aspects of social stratification. The first was a racial factor. There were pure and impure Jews, the character of legitimacy being assured by purity of race. It was thus that three categories existed: the legitimate, those tainted by slight illegitimacy, and those marked by strong illegitimacy. The last were excluded from all social participation. The greatest number of non-legitimate Jews was to be found in Galilee, from which originated the bad reputation of this province.

Moreover there were likewise taboos of religious origin: those who had transgressed the law in one manner or another were regarded as "sinners". While this qualification was generally transitory it demonstrated a sanction of the religious legalistic type. Persons suffering from certain maladies, particularly the mentally sick (who were considered as being possessed by the devil) and lepers were regarded as impure. These persons lived on the margin of Palestinian social and cultural life.

Political System

Here again we must distinguish rural society from the urban. In rural society, authority was tied to the "house" or the lineage. The head of the family was thus the oldest male representative of the lineage and was a member of the council of elders of the village, which collectively exercised authority in the rural micro-society. However, to be able to form part of the council of elders, he had to be a Jew of pure race. In each council, there was likewise a priest. There was not, then, a division into classes, but a hierarchy based on status very close to the clannish type of society.

In the urban areas, society was of course much more complex. Firstly, in the majority of towns there was a council of elders to which only the aristocratic families and the great landowners belonged. These councils had a monopoly of the political and economic power pointing already to the establishment of a class society (even if the concept of class cannot yet be fully applied to this type of stratification). From the point of view of the state, that is to say, of Jerusalem, the political system was even more elaborate. The state was composed of two principal organs: the Sanhedrin and the High Priest. The Sanhedrin had different functions in Judaea, Galilee and over the Diaspora. In Judaea, it constituted

the supreme and all-embracing political power. On the contrary, in Galilee, King Herod governed under Roman control, and the Jews of the Diaspora belonged to different states. In the last two cases, the Sanhedrin played the role of supreme tribunal and ideological power. Consequently the superstructure which represented the state was situated in the Temple. The Sanhedrin was composed of 71 members who belonged mainly to two parties, the Sadducees (families of the high priests and the elders of the aristocratic families) and the group of the lower middle class composed of scribes, Pharisees and priests.

The High Priest had replaced the King since the time of the Babylonian exile. The office was hereditary, but since the establishment of the Roman colonization, the incumbent had been appointed by the Roman procurator. While the authority of the Sanhedrin was exercised only occasionally, the High Priest represented the supreme permanent power emanating from the Temple and exercised it over the political, administrative and economic levels.

Political Hierarchy

Around the Temple was to be found the priestly community which had the responsibility of organizing worship and exercising the policing function through the Levites. It was a priest who held the office of the treasurer. Then followed a series of officials, priests, Levites and laymen.

In analyzing the political system, a stratification of the groups becomes relevant.

The Sadducees constituted the Jewish aristocracy and they were linked to the Roman power through their economic interests.

The Pharisees were members of the urban lower middle class: artisans, small traders and scribes, who wielded little political power although they were represented in the Sanhedrin.

The Zealots were a group who had opted for a solution based on guerilla warfare against the Romans, as well as against the exploitation of big landowners. This group seemed to draw its inspiration from various sources: Judas the Galilean, and a certain Saddoq the Pharisee, and currents of thought which had a hellenic origin. The ideology which gave this group its orientation was typical of that of the Pharisees for it envisaged the restoration of the Jewish state in its theocratic dimension, the tradition of a Davidian messianism. The recruitment of the fighting men, however, seems to have been largely from among the small peasants who had suffered most from the native and foreign exploitation. Even before the time of Jesus, the Roman repression of similar movements had been particularly brutal. Varius, the Roman legate in Syria, had caused 2000 persons to be crucified. The Zealots, animated by the politico-religious ideology just described, came to power in the year AD 68, after having killed the High Priest in office. They set up a new High Priest whom they had chosen from one of the traditional families, and when the Romans intervened against their

usurpation of power, in AD 70 they defended the Temple to the last man, as it was the centre of all religious symbolism. It provoked a retaliation which destroyed Jerusalem. One could call the Zealot movement reformist, as long as this word does not have contemporary or retrograde connotations, for the movement sought to restore a past situation. Sometimes the Zealots are presented as a guerilla movement aimed at establishing a society where class divisions would be abolished, but in fact they scarcely had this character. The small peasants caught up in the armed struggle were there because of their desperate situation, and not because of an ideology which represented their objective interests. The movement seems to have developed only after the death of Jesus.

Finally, it must be added that the political ties with the colonizing Roman Empire were established through the intermediary of the existing political hierarchy. Thus the High Priest was nominated by the Roman procurator, the members of the higher Roman administration were recruited from the aristocracy, and the publicans who were of Jewish origin were charged with collecting the taxes. The set-up of this apparatus permitted a connection to be established between the modes of production of the Roman Empire and of Palestinian society.

Ideology and Religion

We shall deal with the ideological and religious system as an entity because in societies of the type that existed in Palestine there is scarcely any difference between the two. In fact ideology, defined as the explanation and justification of the social and political relationships, is essentially religious. We have seen that the religious leaders and the religious symbol represented by the Temple played a very important role from the economic, social and political points of view. The rationale for the way in which they interacted may be traced to the ideological level.

It is of course very difficult to sum up in a few lines the foundation of the socio-religious ideology of Israel in the first century. In brief it can be said that the belief in the one true God, that is, monotheism of the people of Israel which was itself the product of a long evolution, is at the basis of the whole ideological system. God led his people and Israel had to be faithful to him. That was inscribed in the fundamental development of thought which saw in God the origin of the world and of Man and expressed the relationship between the two particularly by means of the myth of the fall of man and the introduction of evil into the world. To this was added an interpretation of the origin of the people of Israel, linked with their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The history of Israel appeared as the formation of a people: the story of Jahweh, the God, becoming one.

The conquest of Canaan was interpreted as the fulfilment of the promise and the continuation of God's blessing on his people for the future, on condition that they obeyed the law.

The transition from tribal societies to the monarchy, which in the

prophetic literature became one of the symbols of evil and exploitation saw, what we could call in modern language, the advent of a class society. It was here that the reaction of the prophets arose, demonstrating a messianic hope, the idea of a new alliance between God and his people, that of a new Jerusalem, including a collective destiny.

Around 200 BC, apocalyptic literature entered into the religious ideology of Israel. Its origin was Persian and it was characterized by its ability to forge a link between the natural and historical orders; to develop the ideas of individual salvation, as well as that of the Last Judgment, resurrection and re-establishment of the whole order of creation. This literature was influenced by Zarathustra who developed his religious ideas in Persia from the heart of urban social groups. In Judaism, this influence is noticeable particularly with the Macchabees.

Two trends of thought appeared, one stressing millenarianism and the other the idea of the kingdom: a Messiah would return and natural catastrophes would form part of the messianic signs. The Kingdom of God was identified with a heavenly city which would be established after a final judgment.

The religious content of Israel at the time of Jesus is, of course, far too complex to be considered in a few lines. The religious traditions were particularly expressed in three great types of discourses: of Wisdom, the Talmud or the synagogue practices, and of the Apocalypses. There was also the language of ritual or worship, which was that of the priestly office.

Doctrinal Variations among Social Groups

However, what is interesting to consider is the relationship which existed between the religious ideologies of the different social groups we have identified. The Sadducees, who represented the most conservative group, relied on the torah, the original law of Israel and were opposed to the eschatological and apocalyptic tendencies as well as to the idea of the resurrection of the dead.

On the other hand, the Pharisees formed the very core of the eschatological and apocalyptic philosophies. Some of them developed a certain pessimistic idea of Man, insisting on the importance of the other world which had to be won by a strict legalistic observance. Their ideology was typical not only of an urban class which centred its religious conviction on individual salvation, but also of a class which found itself in a stage of transition to a point lower down the social ladder, and which consequently would have a propensity to stress the eschatological aspects.

The scribes, being specialists in religious legislation and the penal code, had what amounted to a monopoly of the knowledge of Hebrew and consequently had at their disposal an important ideological control over the masses: it was they who often officiated in the synagogues on the sabbath. In a great measure, they also shared in the eschatological trends and because of this, they were opposed to the priestly group.

The priests, who were part of an ethnic group, the 24 branches of the tribe of Aaron, were divided into high and low clergy and had a monopoly over the ritual language, that is to say, of worship. They were assisted by the Levites who likewise belonged to a tribe. The Essenes formed a monastic group which believed in leading a life secluded from the world. Finally, the Zealots formed an essentially political group, practising guerilla warfare but ideologically centred on the restoration of Davidic messianism.

These few features show that the different social groups adapted themselves in different ways to the religious ideology which held that God dwelt in the Temple, making it the sign and the reality of the divine pledge given to the entire society of Israel.

Sociology of the Gospel

This analysis leads to the inference that in a society like that of Palestine in that epoch, the religious function obviously went far beyond what we today call the religious reality. The supernatural was everywhere present, and the Temple, symbol and place of the divine presence, was likewise the centre of political and economic power. Seen in this perspective it becomes clear that it was not possible to act on the religious level, without at the same time acting on other levels also. The distinction that we make between the temporal and spiritual plane, between the political and the religious, among specialized institutions in the different domains of human activity, did not exist in the same way in societies of the precapitalist type. Therefore to interpret the behaviour of a person such as Jesus, in strictly religious terms in the modern sense would be erroneous.

It does not follow that it would be possible to find an immediate justification for political action in contemporary societies in the words and actions of Jesus. But it does mean that the interpretation of the Gospel can only be made by taking into account the anthropological and sociological knowledge of the society in which Jesus lived.

Thus, for example, when Jesus takes a stand in favour of the poor, we must know who were the poor in the Palestine of his time. A purely spiritual interpretation is scientifically wrong. His opposition to the group of Sadducees or Pharisees has more than a purely religious import. The choice of the apostles is likewise symbolically significant in the social context of the time. The fact of his announcing a messianism which was other than that of the restoration of Davidism is obviously pregnant with meaning. The radical condemnation of the symbolic religious power has political and economic implications.

The subversion of the symbolic and ideological system is also important. It was particularly a question of the overthrow of the fundamental ideological codes, of the pure and impure, of the rich and poor. We must also place in its general context the fact of reading religious imperatives from the bottom of the socio-religious ladder instead of from the top, as was

the case with Jesus' attitude with regard to the sabbath, to fasting, and the new wine that could not be put in old bottles. We cannot pass over in silence the idea expressed about the destruction of the Temple, when the significance of the Temple was not only that of a religious symbol, but of a fundamental symbol for the whole society. All of this, spelt out in a traditional, precapitalist society has a precise meaning. It is evident that Christ acted fundamentally in the religious field, although the religious field in Palestinian society has a different connotation from that in a Western or Westernized culture.

It is likewise interesting to note that the death of Jesus was the result of a collusion among the forces of the Roman Empire and the Jewish social elite (the High Priest, the Sadducees), the Pharisees and even the crowd which chose Barrabas. It appears very clearly that the message of Jesus had gone far beyond what these different groups could tolerate and that the overthrow of the social order which his message and practice signified and which was well understood by the different groups who put him to death, went further not only in reference to religious beliefs, but even to a reorganization of the existing order. On this subject, could one not say that the fundamental project of Christ envisaged a "Utopia" which in modern language means a classless society?

[The materials for this article have been drawn from the several sources given in the bibliography below, particularly from the work of Fernando Belo, *Lecture materialiste de l'Evangile de Marc, du Cerf, Paris 1974.*]

- S W Baron, *Histoire' Israel, vie sociale et religieuse*, PUF, Paris 1956. -
 Fernando Belo, *Lecture materialiste de l'Evangile de Marc*, du Cerf, Paris 1974.
 E Bikerman, *Les Herodiens*, dans Rev. Bibl., (47), 1938, p. 193 ss.
 Joseph Bonsirven, *Le judaisme palestinien au temps de Jesus-Christ*, t. I.
 Joseph Bonsirven, *Les idees juives au temps de Notre-Seigneur*, Blond et Gay, Paris 1934.
 Joseph Bonsirven, *Les esperances messianiques en Palestine au temps de Jesus-Christ*, dans NRTM, (61) 1934, pp 113-139 et 250-276.
 Gunter Bornkamm, *Qui est Jesus de Nazareth?* Seuil, Paris 1971.
 R Bultmann, *Le Christianisme primitif*, P B P, Paris.
 R Bultmann, *Jesus, mythe et demythologisation*, Seuil, Paris 1968.
 Joseph Coppens, *Le messianisme royal*, du Cerf, Paris 1968.
 Georges Crespy, *Recherche sur la signification politique de la mort du Christ*, dans Lumiere et Vie, n 101, 1971, p 100-110
 Oscar Cullmann, *Dieu et Cesar*, Neuchatel, Paris 1956.
 Oscar Gullmann, *Jesus et les Revolutionnaires de son temps*, Neuchatel, Paris 1970.
 C H Dodd, *Le Fondateur du Christianisme*, Seuil, Paris 1970.
 C H Dodd, *La predication apostolique et ses developpements*, Ed. Universitaires, Paris 1964.
 Joseph Flavius, *Guerre juive et Antiquites Bibliques*, trad. Reinach.
 Fliche et Martin, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, t. I, Blond-Gay, Paris.
 J B Frey, *Le conflit entre le messianisme de Jesus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps*, dans Biblica, (14), 1933.
 Erich Fromm, *Le dogme de Christ et autres essais*, PUF, Paris 1975.
 Joseph Ciblet, *Un mouvement de resistance armee au temps de Jesus?*, dans Revue Theologique de Louvain, 1974. p 409-426.

- I Guignebert, *Le monde juif vers le temps de Jesus*, A Michel, Paris 1861.
A Holl, *Jesus en mauvaise compagnie*, Grasset, Paris 1972.
Joseph Jeremias, *Jerusalem au temps de Jesus*, du Cerf, Paris 1967.
J Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'empire romain*, T. I, Paris 1914.
Joseph Klausner, *Jesus de Nazareth son temps, sa vie sa doctrine*, Payot, Paris 1933.
Gerard Lebrun, *Jesus*, dans *Parole et Societe*, n 82.
E Lohse, *Le milieu du Nouveau Testament*, du Cerf, Paris 1973.
Jean Le Moyne, *Les Sadduceens*, Etudes Bibliques, Paris Gabalda 1972.
Jean Le Moyne, *Le Phariseisme*, Supp. Dict., Cat. t. VII, 1022-115.
Giuseppe Ricciotti, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, A Picard, Paris 1939.
Louis Rougier, *La genese des dogmes chretiens*, A Michel, Paris 1972.
Karel Schubert, *Jesus a la lumiere du Judaisme*, du Cerf, Paris 1974.
Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois 1952.

SUSANTHA GOONETILAKE

Colonial Culture

CULTURAL COLONIZATION is emerging as one of the dominant factors in the social situation of colonial and neo-colonial countries. Colonial artefacts as well as world outlooks tend to be among the most pervasive influences to persist after formal decolonization. This article attempts to examine the global structure whereby colonial culture is generated, transmitted and received, with special attention to the process of its legitimization.

Long before the days of imperialist expansion, cultural contacts existed between peoples far and near, equal and subordinate. The Egyptians transmitted rudimentary concepts of building, writing and irrigation to surrounding regions in the millennium before Christ. Similarly, river valley civilizations like those of the Indus and Sumer exchanged cultural artefacts as is evident in the archaeological remains of the two regions.

At a less known but equally dramatic level there were cultural transactions across the Indian and Pacific Oceans with people of Malaysian and Polynesian stock carrying cultural artefacts like outrigger canoes to regions extending from East Africa to the Pacific Islands. At a more sophisticated level, there was the transmission of the mathematical knowledge of India, mainly algebra, to the European nations through the Arab intermediaries in AD ninth or tenth century. Similarly at an

earlier period there was transmission to India of geometry from Greece. Sometimes these cultural transmissions took the form of diffusion from a dominating culture, like the spread of ideas from the Graeco-Roman world then in ascendancy, to the barbarian regions of Europe.

The cultural transmission before the sixteenth century had one distinguishing feature. Between dominant and dependent peoples, it took place within an unequal relationship and regional boundaries. Thus transmission of culture within the Roman Empire was confined largely to the relatively small (in global terms) geographical area of the *imperium*. Transmission of cultural patterns of ancient India happened largely through the medium of Buddhism and was more or less regional in scope.

Starting with the sixteenth century this pattern changes drastically with the growth of a world economy. In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese and the Spanish made their voyages of discovery, circumnavigated the earth and developed relationships of trade, warfare and culture which can only be described as global in range.

With the sacking of the civilizations in Central and South America and the partial genocide that followed, vast quantities of wealth were transferred to Europe. This pattern of plunder was repeated in Africa and Asia with varying degrees of brutality. A global outlook began to take shape in the European nations which grew rich on the spoils of conquest. The empire-building in far-flung territories set in motion a process whereby cultural artefacts were adopted from remote regions, legitimized in Europe and transmitted to other parts of the world. This process of collection of cultural artefacts and re-transmission supplemented those that arose within the European countries themselves.

Coffee from North Africa

Cultural artefacts so transmitted included not only consumption items like food, clothing, furniture and art objects but also systems of ideas and concepts like religion. It is essential to study the exact mechanism by which this transmission system was maintained in order to realize the present implications of cultural domination. We will therefore trace a few cultural artefacts that arose within the peripheral countries and trace their re-transmission patterns. In addition, we will also trace how cultural artefacts that arose within the Western countries themselves were transmitted. Such transmission and their reception were dependent on the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of the peripheral countries, as well as of the countries in the metropolitan centre. By taking a few examples we will attempt to make clear some of the main features of this system.

In a cursory compilation, one can name literally hundreds of cultural artefacts taken from the periphery and found acceptance in the centre, to be re-transmitted to other parts of the periphery. For example, among foodstuffs, coffee and cocoa which are modern man's main beverages, tobacco which is his main recreational smoking enjoyment, spices, manioc, chillies, curries, potatoes and corn are some of the main.

items. Among intellectual ideas and artistic traditions, the Japanese woodcut has influenced impressionism while African and Oceanic art has exerted a major impact on modern sculpture.

According to the *British Encyclopaedia*, coffee today is consumed by one third of the world's population. Discovered in AD 850 coffee plants were originally grown in Kaffa and taken to Southern Arabia where they were cultivated for about 500 years. Coffee became popular among the Arabs soon and by the time West Europe was in its period of colonial ascendancy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was introduced on the continent. Coffee houses became widespread in Europe and America in the seventeenth century as centres of political, business, social and literary influence. From the reign of Charles III to the early Georges, the London Coffee House was the centre of social life¹. In Queen Anne's time there were well over 500 coffee houses and every respectable leader had his own favourite one. Coffee houses therefore filled the place now occupied by the club, although in a more relaxed and a cheaper fashion. Coffee houses also became a levelling influence as well as a place of exchange of information. Before journalism and telegrams, the coffee houses were centres for clearing political, military and business news at an informal level. Lloyd of later ship and insurance fame was a coffee-house keeper in Lombard Street and the rise of his business interests later had much to do with the central position occupied by the coffee houses.

The coffee houses by becoming centres of fashionable discourse created a demand for coffee beans. To meet it the coffee plant was spread from Saudi Arabia to Sri Lanka in 1658, Java in 1696, Surinam in 1680, Martinique in 1723, Brazil in 1727, Jamaica in 1730, Cuba in 1748, Puerto Rico in 1755, Venezuela in 1784 and to Mexico in 1790. Therefore with Europe in ascendancy not only did coffee become fashionable in Europe, but it was now grown in those regions which had come under its sway. In addition, coffee drinking as a worldwide phenomenon was transmitted to those countries inside the periphery as well as outside.²

Cup that Cheers

The same process is also seen in the case of tea. The earliest reference to tea is in a Chinese document of 350 BC and a manual of tea existed in China by AD 780. The first mention of it in European literature was in 1559 and the first reference by an Englishman was in 1615 according to *British Encyclopaedia*. At the time tea was introduced, England was the greatest coffee-drinking nation. First publicly sold in London in 1657 tea was advertised as "excellent, and by all physicians approved, China drink".

Tea rapidly gained in popularity to such an extent that in a few years, metal and leather tokens were used instead of small change in tea and coffee houses. Known as tea and coffee tokens these were generally

accepted as currency in London's restaurants. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the use of tea as a beverage was well established in Holland. Together with tea came a need for other cultural artefacts surrounding the tea drinking process, leading to the manufacture of tea boards, tea pots, silver spoons, strainers and other items.

It was the East India Company which was central to the introduction and propagation of the tea drinking habit. Later, tea plantations were opened up in India and Sri Lanka using semi-slave labour. Concurrent with these events tea drinking spread to other parts of the world where the colonial bosses went. As the cultivation and drinking of tea was predominantly done by the English or their colonials, there was a tendency for the tea drinking habit to spread largely to those countries under the direct or indirect influence of the British. To the latter category belonged the Middle East. Peripheral countries of other colonial empires like the French or Spanish were generally immune to tea drinking and acquired a greater taste for the cultural artefact transmitted by other colonizers, namely coffee.

The two examples of tea and coffee relate to cultural transmission of artefacts from two regions of old civilization, namely Asia and North Africa. However, cultural re-transmission was not limited only to these continents, but also to Latin America. Almost half the foodcrops grown in the world today is accounted for by corn and potatoes, both plants domesticated by American Indians⁹. Other Indian-developed crops like manioc have become staple food in Africa and parts of Asia. American Indians further introduced to the white man and through him to the rest of mankind more than 80 other domesticated plants including peanuts, chillies, tomatoes, pumpkins, pineapples, avacados, cocoa and tobacco. They also introduced at least 59 drugs including cocoa, (for cocaine and novocaine), curare and cinchona. In addition to these, the American region has given numerous devices like canoes, snow shoes, moccasins, hammocks, kayaks, ponchos and rubber goods like rubber balls, dog sheds and toboggans. We will discuss below three of the food cultural artefacts taken from the American region legitimated as desirable and retransmitted to other parts of the world. These products are respectively cocoa, potato and tobacco.

Food from the New World

Cocoa originally came from Central and South America. Cocoa beans were used in the Maya and Aztec civilizations as means of exchange. The Aztecs used cocoa also as a beverage. On his fourth trip Columbus took cocoa beans to Spain where the drink was later greatly improved by the use of sugar. After a century in Spain, cocoa drinking spread to other parts of Europe and in 1657 the first shop selling cocoa was opened in London. By 1700 the English had added milk to the beverage. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries fashionable chocolate drinking grew to almost a cult in London, Amsterdam and other European

capitals. During the nineteenth century cocoa plantations were opened up in other parts of the world to supply the demand in Europe and in addition cocoa drinking was transmitted by the colonial *herren* to other parts of the world.⁴

The name 'potato' is derived from the American Indian word for the sweet potato, *batata*. In sixteenth-century Europe, the word potato referred only to the sweet potato and from the seventeenth century, it referred exclusively to the common potato. First cultivated 1800 years ago in South America it was introduced into Europe during the second half of the sixteenth century. What attracted widespread consumption was its alleged aphrodisiac properties. By the end of the seventeenth century potato had become a major crop in Ireland and a century later in Germany. The typical Irish peasant in the nineteenth century, it has been estimated, consumed about eight pounds of potatoes per day. It was also introduced as a food crop to all parts of the world where European settlement and influence was occurring, namely North America, Africa, India, Java and Australia.⁵

Tobacco likewise was cultivated by the Indians in North and South America when it was discovered by Columbus and other early European explorers. The Indians used it for its alleged medicinal properties as well as for ceremonials. The introduction of tobacco into Europe took the following time table: France 1556, Portugal 1558, Spain 1559, and England 1565. By the sixteenth century tobacco played a great part in English colonial and commercial expansion and in the trade of the port city of Bristol. From Europe tobacco was taken by the colonizing powers, the Spanish and the Portuguese, to all parts of the world.⁶

Influences on Design and Art

In the centuries following colonial expansion there was a rapid change of food and other cultural habits throughout the world. These influences were also felt in other spheres like fashion and clothing. "By the time of Queen Anne, the East Indian trade had materially altered the drink, the habits of social intercourse, the dress and the artistic taste of the well to do classes among the subjects".⁷ After the Restoration, tea and coffee came in the company of silks and porcelain. Chinaware was brought to Europe by the East India Companies of the Dutch and the English and soon became a fashion with upper-class ladies.⁸ Similarly, mahogany was beginning to come in from the Americas and with it different styles of furniture. The styles of the royal courts in Europe were also influenced by fashions and cultural artefacts from other parts of the world. Thus in the eighteenth-century French Court, there was a high demand by the nobility for printed cotton fabrics, especially those that imitated the rare Indian cotton imported under the name of calico, and chintz. The art of dyeing in the Indian manner became known by the end of the seventeenth century and so such imitations were possible.⁹ These artefacts in the world of fashion adopted at the centre were likewise transmitted

by the colonizing powers to the rest of the world they controlled, so that the upper strata in the dependent countries began to imitate the fashions now emanating from the centre.

We have so far illustrated the mechanism of cultural adoption and legitimization at the centre and transmission to the periphery of some food items, as well as a few items in the fashion sector. In the field of art we can discern similar processes.

Concepts in the arts emanating from the East like the Japanese woodcut or Egyptian art have had minor influences on the European art traditions of modern times. An outstanding example is in the case of sculpture and the adoption of styles from African and Oceanic regions. In the discussions of these trends, I draw almost exclusively from Herbert Read's *The Concise History of Modern Sculpture*.

According to Read, the past 100 years has seen the injection of at least seven exotic styles in the mainstream of European art. These are (a) Far Eastern art (b) African tribal art (c) Primitive art (d) Greek Historic art (specially neolithic cave paintings) (e) Greek Columbian art (f) Early Greek and Etruscan art and (g) Early Christian art. There have been also in addition minor influences like Polynesian art. I shall here refer almost exclusively to primitive art.

Primitive Art for the Alienated

The Western interest in primitive art begins with Van Gogh and Gauguin and, growing in intensity from year to year, the concept of the primitive penetrated deeply into the consciousness of French artists. (This is also possibly because of the French cultural heritage of Rousseau's "Noble Savage"). By 1904 the painter Vlaminck had taken an interest in primitive art and this interest soon spread from him to Derain and then to Matisse. Derain and Matisse both collected African sculpture and it was to Matisse that Picasso owed his first knowledge of African sculpture.

The interest in primitive art occurred at a time when modern man was under socio-psychological stress from the alienating influences of industrial civilization. As Read put it, modern man was in search of a new language to satisfy his new longings and aspirations. All the exotic arts gave the modern artist the possibility to adapt and evolve a new genre: his purpose was not imitation but assimilation and regeneration. In the two influences that combined to form the new style of Cubism, primitive art, especially Negro sculpture, began to be represented by the art of Picasso. In fulfilling the emotional needs of the artist and the modern man in the twentieth century, the newly adopted art had a definite orientation. According to Read, Picasso's iron figures had a kind of magic associated in the Western mind with the artistic cults of "primitive" races. They were sinister, mysterious or even humorous.

Thus, the modern sculptural tradition grew up by taking cultural artefacts that had grown up organically within, say an African context. They were then re-transformed and adapted to fit the cultural and

emotional needs of Western alienated man and his artist. Subsequently this tradition has spread all over the world, that is the world which has been under Western influence.

In the peripheral countries which received this sculpture and the rest of modern art, it was received as the latest and the best without any reference to any organic interaction with local socio-economic or cultural traditions. Therefore a concept which fitted certain socio-economic and cultural needs of Africa was adopted in Europe to fit the latter's cultural needs and was then transmitted to the periphery as a fashionable product.

Culture and Education Packages

We have seen how elements of culture generated in some countries in the periphery are taken to the centre, legitimized and transmitted back to the periphery as a whole. It is now useful to see how this transmitted package is received in the periphery. Packages so transmitted include both elements that are re-transmitted to the centre, as well as those emanating from the centre itself. In addition to purely parochial cultural artefacts, there have been those of a more universal nature like the sciences and different technologies which have been so transmitted. Especially with regard to science and technology it is well known that this is growing exponentially in the West (during the last few centuries the knowledge content has been virtually doubling every seven years). There is also the recent calculation by the United Nations that 98 per cent of research and development is done in the centre while only 2 per cent is done in the periphery. These are some of the broad outlines of the problem of transmission from the centre.

The cultural artefacts created in the West and transmitted include a wide variety of items including forms of dress and styles of music, languages, religions, methods of looking at literature, theories of criticism and of social reality. Some of these transmitted elements have been influenced by items received from the periphery, in the manner we have noted.

These cultural artefacts transmitted out of endogenous generation in Europe are many. Apart from religion they include many of the products considered modern. One of the most pervasive influences transferred is a formalized conditioning of looking at reality, namely the modern education package. Educational packages vary from one Western country to another although there is a large degree of similarity in their contents as they arise from a common heritage. These packages themselves have historically arisen from an internal dialogue within the countries.

In most colonial and ex-colonial countries the educational package used is an almost identical transfer of the metropolitan package. Thus the syllabus of schools and universities in French colonies is the same as that of France and that of English colonies same as that of England. (And one used to find local products of such education arguing the merits of French education versus the English and vice versa: cultural puppetry taken to its obvious end). The viewpoint of the local colony given in the contents of

such packages is basically that of the colonizer going to the ridiculous extent of teaching Africans about Vasco da Gama, Livingstone and Rhodes 'discovering' Africa.

With formal decolonization there has been somewhat of a change in the straight transfer package, and especially in primary education some local aspects have been incorporated. Yet the basic metropolitan orientation still survives to a large extent.¹⁰ With the recent efforts of such UN agencies as UNESCO there has been elements of "universality" in the package transmitted but even in such cases a high degree of parochialism is also transmitted.¹¹

The best manner in which we can illustrate this process by which the transmitted culture is received by the peripheral society is by observing the example of the Hawaiian Islands where a rapid cultural impact led to an extreme reversal of patterns. We had noted earlier the impact of Oceanic art on modern sculpture. Some of the earliest modern artists to be influenced by the exotic culture were Gauguin and Van Gogh who were very favourably impressed by their contact with the Polynesian Islands. They were both influenced by the drastically different sexual mores in these societies.

Puritan Onslaught on Hula

In the case of the Hawaiian Islands too, similar patterns of a social system drastically different from what the Europeans in the nineteenth century were used to, existed. For the Hawaiians, sex had not been revealed as sinful and they thought that to satisfy the sexual appetite was no more indecent than satisfying hunger or thirst. "Marriage was an informality accomplished by the simple parental ceremony of inviting the prospective bride and groom to be side by side and pulling a *tapā* covering over them"¹². Likewise separation came about easily. The islanders had other habits which were equally permissive as for instance the men freely exchanging wives thinking no less of their husbands for being sought after by other women.

It was an economy built on abundance. For four months of the year, there was virtually an open holiday with athletics, surfing, parading, over-eating and over-indulgence. To god-fearing Europeans who saw this society, the Pacific Islands were dens of iniquity. For the Connecticut missionaries who were the first to come to the region, the population was crying out to be saved.¹³

For this band of gossellers the central belief was that of the Puritan principle that salvation existed only for the elect. It was a seven-day-week faith. And the thou-shalt-not proscriptions of this particular group extended beyond the Ten Commandments. An anti-theatre, anti-dance, anti-sex, anti-card-playing, anti-extravagance, anti-indulgence code was woven into the fabric of their beliefs. It was also anti-Roman Catholic, and as late as 1835 there were only a few hundred Catholics in the whole of Connecticut.

Thus perhaps the most indulgent and free society in the world confronted perhaps the strictest puritanical group which the West had to offer. And as this was not a case of general two-way cultural exchange, but predominantly one of subordination under semi-colonial conditions, the Hawaiians could offer only very little resistance. To the missionaries, the islanders had to be saved, although the church itself was not so sure of the purity of its own missionaries. It was afraid of sending bachelors, and had them hurriedly wed before being sent out to preach. "Lock, stock and barrel, the Connecticut way of life was transported to Hawaii."

One of the first acts was to remove the cause for the missionaries' shock at seeing so many scantily attired persons. Lucy Thurstan, one of the first missionaries, decided that "putting clothing on the natives" was the first step in this direction.¹⁴ The abhorrence of local culture extended to such an extent that some of the preachers complained that even the fruits of the island tasted heathenish.¹⁵ Under the onslaught, the local culture quickly was overcome and the islanders came to church with covered heads and covered bosoms. It was not long before the entire population was dressed in *holokus* or shapeless *mumus*, the basic strategy of the latter being to hide from view any semblance to the human shape and form.

Legitimation by Imitation

The same patterns of imposition of a strict puritanical culture derived from the ethos of the nineteenth century are seen also in most other countries. In the case of another island Sri Lanka, one-third across the world from Hawaii a similar although less dramatic pattern emerged. Contemporary Sinhalese writers as well as European visitors recorded the existence of a non-rigid system of family and interpersonal relationships in Sri Lanka. One of the earliest commentators was the eighteenth-century English writer Robert Knox, a prisoner of the Kandyan kingdom for eighteen years who left description of a society with relative flexibility in family life, with a high degree of informality in divorce and separation.¹⁶ These observations have also been repeated by other writers in the nineteenth century. The Kandyan kingdom itself, Sri Lanka's last bastion to fall, had engraved in its laws and customs some of these "moral laxities". However, soon after British rule became consolidated, such family and marriage laws were changed to conform to the established ethos of the colonizing powers.¹⁷

Thus, just like the ruling groups in Hawaii were made to wear the *mumu*, in Sri Lanka of the sixteenth century one of its three kings was baptized in Portugal as Don Juan Dharmapala. He and the royal court took to European attire. The royalty and the upper strata changed their religion to Christianity and their personal names to Portuguese prenomes.

Therefore, these acts of imitation first occur among those groups that have close economic and political ties with the colonial rulers, groups that we may call comprador classes. The adoption of cultural elements

by the comprador classes is different in nature from the adoption of cultural elements in the metropolitan centre. In the centre, cultural elements are generally adopted after debate, discussion and even controversy over a virile period of exposure to the public. In the periphery, the comprador classes adopt cultural artefacts purely by the fact that they are transmitted from the centre as desirable products and legitimated as such. Therefore, legitimation at the centre is by discussion whilst at the periphery it is by imitation.

Once adopted by the ruling strata of the colony, further patterns of imitation occur downwards among the classes in the colony. This general process has been described by the Indian sociologist, M N Srinivas as Sanskritization in the particular case which he described of transmission of culture downwards through the castes. Sanskritization is the process whereby castes (or in our case classes) adopt as acts of imitation a cultural product of the group or class above it. By this process the culture that was received by the comprador classes as an act of imitation is further transmitted downwards by successive acts of imitation. Such an imitative process takes time and so in this imitative culture, the cultural package which is transmitted to the top may take decades or even centuries to reach the bottom, depending on the degree of ease with which communication across classes occur.

Percolation Downward

This latter fact has interesting possibilities specially for countries that have suffered a lengthy period of cultural domination. Because of the time-lag effects that often occur in such an imitative society, those at the bottom will be imitating the cultural package that was introduced, say 20 years ago at the top-end of the society, (and was in vogue 30 years ago at the metropolitan countries where the cultural artefacts in the first place arose, the transfer from the metropolitan centre to the top comprador classes also taking time.) This is seen in numerous examples.

For instance in Sri Lanka which has had a colonial history of over 400 years some of the packages which were transmitted no longer exist at the top, but exist at the bottom end. (We are restricting here for discussion only to the coastal strip of Sri Lanka from Chilaw to Tangalle which had a continuous history of colonial overlordship). This is seen for example in names. Those at the bottom end use names like Singho, which are Portuguese in origin and which would have been fashionable in the upper strata 200 years ago or so. We have mentioned earlier how the traditional concepts concerning the norms of marriage and the relationship between the sexes were changed under colonial domination in the nineteenth century. Many of these concepts of Victorian England were absorbed in the Buddhist revival movement of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries. These Puritan norms which were only followed at the top earlier (whilst the bottom end was relatively

non-Puritan) over the course of decades spread to the lower strata of the social spectrum. Therefore, one has today an interesting example of those, say of lower middle-class origins, defending as their 'traditional culture', nineteenth-century Victorianism against the later cultural artefacts of a more permissive kind which have been transmitted over the last two decades or so from the West. In short, in such an imitative situation what is occurring is a shadow play involving a duel between the Europe of the nineteenth and of the mid-twentieth century.

In describing transmission of imposed cultural patterns downwards in the peripheral countries it should not be imagined that this downward transmission was simple or easy. Although the general pattern was that of the alien culture being transmitted downwards by control of the economic, political and cultural structure at the top, it was always accompanied by processes of opposition to the imposed culture as well as by processes of adaptation or only of surface adoption of the transmitted pattern, that is by processes of cheating.

Church Militant

It was in the extreme cases of imposition of alien religions that opposition was always strong, specially from those of long history and high sophistication as the Asian faiths. Thus the process of christianization was imposed in Sri Lanka from early colonial times by the Portuguese, accompanied by compulsory changes in the names of local inhabitants. The Sri Lankan western coast is replete with persons having Portuguese names like Fernando, Silva, Perera, Dias and Cabraal, a phenomenon found in other areas of Portuguese cultural contact—Brazil, Angola and Mozambique. The early period of cultural opposition to the imposed religion is indicated by the flight of monks from areas under Portuguese control as well as by the sacking, looting and burning of the two main centres of Buddhist and Hindu temples in the island (Devundara and Trincomalee, the latter with the famed thousand-pillar temple). These facts we know from Portuguese and local records and there are parallels in the Spanish plunder of the Inca and Aztec temples and the imposition of Christianity.^{1a}

Some of the imposed cultural artefacts were adapted to local use and there was intermixing of the two elements. Christian sects used sometimes parts of local ritual, for instance the *voodoo* of Haiti. In the relentless cultural imposition from the Spanish and the Portuguese, local adaptations were not generally tolerated. An interesting contrast here is the iconography of religious teachers. Statues of the Buddha which are part of the cultural package of Buddhism were transmitted under conditions of relative peace between nations and rarely under the sword. Consequently on statues of Buddha the facial features have been adapted to fit local physiognomy. Japanese statues look distinctively Japanese in appearance as the Indian ones are distinctively Indian in appearance. In the case of statues of Christ, especially in cases of transmission under Portuguese

and Spanish times, they still retain their European styles.

However, with the weakening of the political, economic and cultural hold, and the growth of self-confidence among the colonized, there have been movements rejecting the imposed system. This has occurred in the Hindu and Buddhist revivalist movements in the south and south-east Asian regions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sometimes these cultural reactions were tied to political protest which often gave rise to decolonization movements. The Gandhian independence movement in India and the associated emphasis on Hindu philosophy and culture by persons like Radhakrishnan and Coomaraswamy are broadly part of this process.

Similarly there were Buddhist revivalist movements in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand associated with the work of such reformers as Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the Mahabodhi Society of India. Sometimes these cultural protests incorporated aspects of the imposed culture and, adopting it as its own, used it against the imposed culture. Thus Protestant values permeated some of the thinking of the leaders of the Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka due perhaps to the fact that they themselves were educated in a christianized milieu, often in missionary schools. An interesting aspect to this is seen in the following example.

Imposed Culture in the Dependency

The early Christian missionaries in their cultural imposition propagated clothing styles, covering the body from top to bottom, appropriate to the colder European climate. Now, a few centuries later, heirs to this cultural imposition are local inhabitants who, speaking in the name of traditional Asian culture, reject as alien more informal and scantier forms of dress more attuned to local conditions but which are now coming from the West.

The imposed culture is taken in and defended as one's own against the newer waves coming in from the centre. Therefore cultural imposition in a dependent country is not a simple phenomenon. When a culture is imposed, it is at the initial stages of colonization against the will of the colonized who have to be subjugated, and their leading members either supplanted or co-opted for the colonizing mission. Once such co-option takes place, cultural imposition is adopted freely by the comprador section and transmitted downwards. In such downward transmission, it sometimes meets with opposition from groups whose culture is being displaced. In the case of cultural colonization that occurs over centuries, it may happen that lower sections of the society who received a culture from the colonizing powers a few decades earlier, would protest against the latest cultural transmission while considering the older transmission as a part of their indigenous cultural tradition. In such cases, protest and counter-protest take the form of shadow boxing to tunes played at different times in the European centre.

The most interesting feature of this phenomenon is occurring right now in what has been called the "counter culture" being transmitted to the culturally dependent countries. The counter culture arose in the mid- and late 60s in America and Europe out of certain social and political factors of a deep nature occurring in these countries. Some of the reasons have been the protest movement against the Vietnam war, Black protests, rise of affluence in the West and the growth of an educated generation. The counter culture set in motion a deep mood of questioning of the fabric of Western civilization. It included the questioning of the work ethic and Victorian values, and changes of life styles in the growth of permissiveness in some aspects of interpersonal life. Some of the questioning of the counter culture has also led at least partially to fundamental critiques in the hard and social sciences.

Counter Culture

The rise of the counter culture has been chronicled by Rozack in *The Making of a Counter Culture* and Reich in *The Greening of America* and by other writers. However, the main features of the counter culture and its more obvious overt manifestations are well known: a disrespect for authority and the questioning of accepted values as manifested, for instance, in long hair and the wearing of clothing symbolic of both an anti-fashion attitude and a rejection of material values (for example, in the wearing of faded blue jeans). The movement also resulted in new forms of pop music as well as changes in the pop culture itself, emphasizing an attitude of abandonment and permissiveness.

As a part of the transmission process in colonial culture, aspects of the counter culture have now reached the dependent countries after a time lag. A movement which in the West emphasizes innovativeness, creativity and spontaneity has assumed almost ludicrous forms in an imitative culture. Thus one sees in south and south-east Asia, children of the bourgeoisie wearing faded denims and long hair and imitating what they have seen in films and magazines of the West. However, the central core of protest and spontaneity is absent and the whole exercise is one in the opposite direction, namely of imitativeness. The songs sung by the pop groups in the region and listened to by the native bourgeoisie are either identical with those in the top of the charts in the West or are imitations in a similar genre. The pop singers in the West today have some organic interaction with the societies in which they live and the songs they sing have at least some relevance to the youth of those countries. But the only relevance of the pop singers in the dependent countries to the culture of the audience they address is that of imitation only. Here, of course, we must emphasize that we are dealing with the south and south-east Asian region only and about a cultural artefact, namely pop music, transmitted from the West. In pop music, part of the package being transmitted now, Reggae, originates in the Caribbean.

In describing the world system of cultural generation, legitimization, transmission and reception, we have restricted ourselves so far only to the Western countries and the "Third World". The question arises, where do the socialist countries fit into this general model? Generally, in the economic and political spheres, socialist countries are considered as separate entities distinct from both the Third World and the Western World. This demarcation is made generally by Western, socialist and Third World writers themselves. Recently however, Samir Amin has advanced the thesis that in actuality from a world perspective, although different capitalist and socialist systems exist there is only a single market system. He believes that socialist economies are really enclaves tied by trade relationships to the Western countries and so form part of the capitalist world market. The terms of these trade relationships depend on the general trading patterns as determined by the world capitalist economy. Whatever the merits or otherwise of this thesis in the economic sphere, there is a strong evidence to indicate that in the cultural sphere one can discern, at least partially, a single world system.

Impact on Socialist World

In the early decades of a socialist system, it is not yet properly developed and the generation of scientific and technological ideas is not so prolific. Therefore extensive borrowing occurs from the West legitimated also by the fact that Marxism in being scientific socialism is associated with and encourages the "scientific". Although forms of western political organization may be rejected, the hard sciences and their particular manifestations in technology are borrowed avidly. In the realm of science and hard technology more elements of universality may seem to exist than in the social sciences and the arts.

Marxist theory deals with two aspects of the socio-economic sphere involving an infrastructure based on relations of production and a superstructure in social and cultural matters. To the latter sphere belongs also the sciences and arts, which would presumably have varying degrees of universality and ethnocentricity depending on their particular relationship to the infrastructure. The Soviet Union took as part of its baggage from the pre-revolutionary era almost all the cultural products of the bourgeoisie, in music (Beethoven, Tchaikowsky or Mozart) and art and literature (Dickens, Flaubert or Tolstoy).

The USSR was born in the background of many revolutionary ideas occurring in Europe in the first two decades of the present century. In addition to the purely political ideas, it was also heir to the revolutionary ideas challenging nineteenth-century concepts of the family in the social sphere and of art, literature and architecture in the cultural spheres. The Soviet Union was therefore a part of the general European *avant garde* in the early turbulent decades. Soon after the revolution, the Soviet Union adopted "revolutionary" attitudes in the social and cultural spheres, and there was consequently a high degree of innovation. By the

thirties, however, a new mood of conservatism entered this field and what was accepted as legitimate and desirable were largely those cultural and social forms reminiscent of nineteenth-century Europe.

In legitimizing nineteenth-century bourgeois culture, interesting things happened to the culture of suppressed non-European traditions. An important example is the case of jazz music which arose out of a culture of protest of Black Americans with its roots in the worst days of American slavery. Jazz music, particularly the blues form, was therefore the folk music of the American Negro. It was legitimized in the upper circles of America in the 1930s and began to be recognized as a distinct art form by the 40s. However, Soviet arbiters of cultural taste judged it as decadent and did not initially entertain jazz or its more popular versions in pop music. However, by the late 50s, this picture began to change, especially with cultural contacts with revolutionary Cuba. Jazz as well as Latin American music were legitimized and accepted as forms of Cuban culture. Generally speaking, the culture and art scene in the Soviet Union has not been remarkably adventurous.

Transmission Process

In cultural transmission in the colonial era there are two processes at work, one of endogenous generation of culture at the centre which is then transmitted to the periphery, and the other of cultural artefacts taken from the periphery legitimized at the centre and re-transmitted to the periphery. Legitimization of both endogenous and exogenous cultural elements at the metropolis is the result of discussion, dialogue and conflict depending on the circumstances. The culture thus legitimized is exported to comprador classes in the periphery. It is imposed and legitimized by imitation.

Eroding existing patterns, the newly imitated styles and habits are transmitted down the social hierarchy. Their acceptance is not easy. There are often protests against the imposed culture, cheating in the 'adoption process, or adaptation and change before use.

It so happens in societies which have been colonized for too long, that cultural conflicts break out between patterns recently adopted and those adopted earlier. The culture packets transmitted at different times exist in different layers of society and conflicts ensue.

The socialist countries, especially those in eastern Europe, present an interesting case in that they seem, at least partially, to belong to the same world system of cultural domination. The world scene at the present time is therefore not a global culture village *a la* McLuhan but a global village largely orchestrated by village leaders in the centre.

¹ G M Trevelyan, *Illustrated English Social History*, vol III, Pelican, 1964, p 60.

² *The British Encyclopaedia*.

³ Alvin M Josephy, *The Indian Heritage of America*, Knopf, New York 1968, p 32.

⁴ *The British Encyclopaedia*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ G M Trevelyan, *op.cit.*, vol II, p 151.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, vol III, p 3.
- ⁹ George Savage, *A Concise History of Interior Decoration*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1966, p 145.
- ¹⁰ Phillip G Altbach, "Education and Neo-colonialism", *Teachers College Record*, May 1971.
- ¹¹ Martin Carnoy, *Education-as Cultural Imperialism*, David McKay Co Inc., New York 1974.
- ¹² W Storrsheelt, *The Islands*, Holt Reinhart, 1966, p 23.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p 53.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p 62.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Robert Knox, *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, Glasgow 1911.
- ¹⁷ Michael Roberts, *Facets of Modern Ceylon History*, Colombo 1975, p 27-31.
- ¹⁸ Fernando de Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, translated by S G Perera, Colombo 1930.
- ¹⁹ Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale, A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*, 1974.

NOTES

U S Foreign Policy of Interventionism

THE VARIOUS analyses of the US debacle in Vietnam have produced a number of theories aimed at explaining the causes of US intervention. For some, the US involvement was "accidental",¹ the result of a "mistake" or "wrong advice". To some others, it was due to a "series of misperceptions".² People like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr come out with the "Quagmire" theory of "one more step" which got the United States deeply involved, as if the process of "incremental change" precludes the knowledge of the course followed. Others like Daniel Ellsberg say that the intervention was the offshoot of a "deliberate and rationally calculated process." Whether the US war in Vietnam was a "policy aberration", or the result of the pursuit of "imperial" (domination) role, or the logic of imperialism (economic) in the sense of systemic imperative, depends on how Vietnam fits into the US "world view".

The emergence of the United States from the Second World War as an unchallenged power occurred amidst the emergence (or re-emergence) of the Cold War which was formally inaugurated by Churchill in a speech at Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946 with President Truman in the chair. The globalization of US power was justified as a necessary sequel to alleged Soviet aggressiveness. For well over a decade, the proposition of the Soviet Union having initiated the Cold War was projected as a self-evident truth by the establishment through efficient "news management", manipulation of mass media, and through its academic surrogates. Mostly this thesis went on unchallenged for quite some time³ before a serious reappraisal of the historical evidence set the record straight through the efforts of what have come to be known as the "revisionist" Cold War historians.⁴

As for the bogey of Soviet "threat" as the centrepiece of Cold War is concerned, Moscow just did not have the capacity to dominate the international scene as was sought to be made out by the United States. Having borne the main brunt of the Nazi assault, the Soviet Union had suffered most: fifteen to twenty million citizens dead, twenty five million rendered homeless, and a fourth of its pre-war wealth destroyed.⁵

The cost of victory was staggering. . . Soviet casualties were ten times

those of all Western allies combined. Property damage was estimated at 679,000 million roubles. The destruction included 6,000,000 buildings in 1700 devastated cities, 70,000 ruined villages, including 48,000 schools, 43,000 libraries, 31,000 factories, 13,000 bridges, 40,000 miles of railway track... The USA would have suffered a comparable disaster... with 27,000,000 homeless and most of the area east of the Mississippi occupied and destroyed.⁶

And furthermore:

So fearful was the toll taken by the Horsemen of the Apocalypse that even in 1956 the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Lithuania had fewer inhabitants than in 1940. So appalling was the devastation of homes and lives and livelihoods that no alien observer could reasonably imagine any recovery within less than a generation...

However, a decade later the USSR was a land transformed...

The miracle of restoration, unlike its counterpart in West Germany, Normandy, and the other battle-scarred regions, was achieved without foreign aid. Lend-Lease was abruptly terminated with the cessation of hostilities...

During the decade after victory, the USSR was among the few countries denied American largess. Soviet Muscovy, out of its own resources, nevertheless, restored and further developed an expanding economy, and this more swiftly and effectively than did Britain and Western nations of the continent, and other beneficiaries of Yankee charity.⁷

Cold War Myths and Realities

The postwar picture of the United States presented a striking contrast. Apart from the 300,000 killed (which is microscopic in comparison to the European human loss), its land was untouched and its economy booming. Its industrial growth was phenomenal. Its GNP went up from \$ 91 billion to \$ 166 billion. Lend-Lease supplies to the allies were worth \$ 30 billion.⁸ "For most Americans, World War II spelled neither hardships nor suffering but a 'better way of life'".⁹ As a Soviet paper wryly commented:

The USA is the richest capitalist country. It profited particularly at the time of the two world wars, 1914-18 and 1939-45. These wars laid waste all the countries of the world, carried off millions of human beings, resulted in enormous destruction. But they did not touch America. To the United States fell the remunerative role of supplier of weapons and other goods to the belligerent armies. Production in the USA expanded, the profits of the capitalist doubled, many countries incurred debts of hundreds of millions of dollars to America.¹⁰

As early as in 1946, the US champions of the Cold War, more than anyone else, were well aware that the Soviet Union just did not have the capability to go in for war. Dean Acheson the liberal architect of the Cold War, has admitted that the early postwar fears of Soviet

military invasion of Western Europe were exaggerated.¹¹ In May the then US Ambassador to USSR, Walter Bedel-Smith, was "convinced that there will be no war with Russia. The Russians are too weak. They have no air force. It will take them much more than twenty years to build a good fleet, no matter how hard they try."¹² Why then did the United States rake up anti-communist hysteria and flex its muscles far and wide in a relentless expansionist drive?

After the Second World War the United States was faced with the traumatic possibility of denial of its economic penetration into the markets, industries, and raw materials in many parts of the world. This would have forced the United States to nationalize the means of production and distribution to avoid the crisis of overproduction and consequent depression.¹³ Lafeber vividly describes the nexus between the industrialization of US economy, its propensity to produce surplus commodities which could not be marketed internally and the development of the elite perceptions that foreign markets were vital to the maintenance of domestic social stability.¹⁴ Towards the close of the war, Dean Acheson told a Congressional Committee:

If you wish to control the entire trade and income of the United States, which means the life of the people, you would probably fix it so that everything produced here would be consumed here, but that would completely change our constitution, our relations to property, human liberty, our very conception of law. And nobody contemplates that. Therefore, you find you must look to other markets and markets are abroad.¹⁵

Stick and Carrot

Even during Roosevelt's administration, non-military interventionist methods were employed to frustrate Cuba's revolution of 1933, and to create major difficulties for the Cardena regime in Mexico after it nationalized US oil holdings.¹⁶ The "open door" or "informal empire" interpretation of the US global policy has been detailed out by Professor Williams.¹⁷ Uninhibited economic expansion and preservation of domestic capitalist order have been at the root of US "world view".

The United States designed its foreign policy for protecting its business interests, seeking commercial and investment opportunities, and raw materials abroad. This, in turn, would be done only by imposing its own concepts of economic order beyond its frontiers. Its inexorable logic was the launching of a "holy war" against any antithetical ideology and state. Private enterprise could be saved "at home by imposing it abroad". Truman described the system succinctly in March 1947: "The whole world should adopt the American system ... The American system can survive in America only if it becomes a world system."¹⁸ The ruling circles saw the urgency of making Western economic concepts internationally viable for the survival of profitable private business.¹⁹ In the so-called Third World, Washington accepted decolonization only so long as it did not preclude

opportunities for its economic penetration. Any anti-colonial struggle with revolutionary socio-economic content was opposed by it in every possible way. These facts defined the US security needs whether it was "Roll Back", "Containment", "Pre-emptive Strike", "Instant Massive Retaliation", "2½ Wars", or "1½ War" strategy.

"Aid" and military power were the two major instruments used for practising this "world view". "Aid" was used for buying the acceptance of "open door" policies by the recipient countries to facilitate foreign investments and trade by the United States and other metropolitan powers. As the former president of the World Bank, Eugene Black, said:

Our foreign aid programmes constitute a distinct benefit to American business. The three major benefits are: (1) Foreign aid provides a substantial and immediate market for US goods and services. (2) Foreign aid stimulates the development of new overseas markets for US Companies. (3) Foreign aid orients national economies toward a free enterprise system in which US firms can prosper.²⁰

The supremacy of the dollar in the international monetary system was achieved through the Bretton Woods arrangement. Where "aid" did not click or was not accepted, subversion and direct or indirect use of military power was resorted to. The United States established its military presence throughout the world through a series of pacts, alliances and doctrines that enabled it to intervene anywhere. It not only retained its old military bases abroad but also acquired new ones, including the numerous ones around the Soviet Union ("Cordon Sanitaire") from which conventional or nuclear attacks could be launched at a time when the Soviets lacked a similar capacity.

Free World Gendarme

The political future of eastern Europe was shrouded in mystery in the early postwar period. Hungary and Czechoslovakia had not gone Communist till after the Truman Doctrine of 12 March 1947. That the Soviet Union had nothing to do with the crisis in Greece is now well established as is the lack of evidence regarding the alleged Soviet desire for invasion of West Germany. This is in striking contrast to the postwar US machinations in the national politics of Italy, France, West Germany and other parts of western Europe.²¹ US disposition to use occupation forces for conserving the capitalist order manifested itself in its attitude to left-led resistance movements in Italy, France and Belgium. The termination of the Lend-Lease and the denial of postwar reconstruction aid were used by the United States to bully the recalcitrant states.

Any political system which did not entertain "free-enterprise" system was not to be considered "free". The political form did not matter so long as a country was anchored in the "private enterprise" concept. Such a planning ruled out the right of any nation to chart out its future along lines incompatible with the interests of the capitalist order. Continued economic plunder of the Third World countries dictated the perpetuation

of regimes which deny the legitimate aspirations of their people for social and economic change.

This goal had to be rationalized for 'selling' it abroad, and for manipulating public opinion at home in its favour. Thus, Senator Vandenberg warned Truman to "scare the hell out of American people" for mustering their support. So the clichés about confrontation between "free" world and "enslaved" world, forces of "good" and "evil", "Christian civilization" and "Godless communism." These myths became a political necessity. McCarthyian witch-hunt was the highest watermark of this hysteria worked up to rally public support for US expansionism in support of "open door" policy and its logical necessity, a costly expanding military machine. Domestic dissent against this policy was stifled with the convenient labels of "isolationists" or "communists" or "pro-communist agents."

The United States took upon itself the role of self-styled policeman. It had been even so before but it assumed global dimension in the post-war world of cataclysmic changes. "History and our achievements", said President Johnson in an address in 1965, "has thrust upon us the principal responsibility for the protection of freedom on earth."²² Any society which structured itself against the precepts of "Private Enterprise"—thus confronting the United States with shrinking market opportunities and denial of control of raw materials—was against the United States and, therefore, against "freedom". Counter-revolutionary doctrine became the support structure of US foreign policy and was at the heart of the "manifest destiny". The dishing out of 149 billions as loans and grants from 1946-71, and the military expenditure of one and a third trillion dollars since 1946 was done in pursuit of this counter-revolutionary policy the world over. Aid and advice (military and economic) was furnished to the client governments, and only when they started tottering was direct intervention resorted to.

Interventionist Record

US intervention in other countries for preventing people from overthrowing a satellite government became a regular feature of postwar policy; Greece in 1948, CIA coup in Iran in 1953 in favour of the Shah against Mossadegh; against Jacob Arbenzo's neutralist government in Guatemala in 1954; landing of marines in Lebanon in 1958; Cuba in 1961 against Lumumba in Congo in 1964; Indonesia in 1965; British Guiana in 1964; overthrow of the elected neutralist government of Joas Goulart in Brazil in 1964, Ghana in 1966; despatch of marines to Dominican Republic; Greece in 1967.²³ Presiding over a meeting of the US National Security Council called on 27 June 1970 for engineering the overthrow of the elected Allende government in Chile, Henry Kissinger is reported to have remarked: "I do not see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist because of the irresponsibility of its people."²⁴ Ironically, President Gerald Ford defended the US "right" to

subvert any foreign government.

The successful revolutions in many parts of the world have not been "exported" by the Soviet Union. For the United States, however, every revolutionary government was a "Kremlin agent". Every revolution, however indigenous, was a "conspiracy". The denial of the autonomy of revolutionary movements was necessary for rationalizing counter-revolutionary policies.

Vietnam was thus not a "mistake" but a product of a well thought out US anti-revolutionary planning. Vietnam may not have been of any immediate economic importance to the United States but it was strategically important to the whole imperialist system. A successful revolution there was bound to have a bad demonstration effect. Suppression of revolution in Vietnam was necessary for showing to the people in Asia, Africa and Latin America that wars of liberation could not work. As Walt Rostow put it, "It is on this spot (in Vietnam) that we have to break the liberation war...If we do not break it here we shall have to face it again in Thailand, Venezuela, and elsewhere. Vietnam is a clear testing ground for our policy in the world."²⁵ Pleading for an escalation of the Vietnam war, the then Defence Secretary, Robert McNamara, held that South Vietnam had become "a test case of US capacity to help a nation to meet a communist 'war of liberation'".²⁶

US Economic Interests Paramount

Even in case of Vietnam the economic element has not been missing. The vice-president of the Chase Manhattan Bank declared in 1965 "In the past foreign investors have been somewhat wary of the overall political prospect for the (south-east Asia) region. I must say, though, that the US actions in Vietnam this year—which have demonstrated that the US will continue to give effective protection to the free nations of the region—have considerably reassured both Asian and Western investors. In fact, I see some reason for hope that the same sort of economic growth may take place in the free economies of Asia that took place in Europe after the Truman doctrine and after NATO provided a protective shield. The same thing also took place in Japan after the US intervention in Korea removed investors' doubts."²⁷

The National Security Council paper (NSC—68) dated 23 December 1949 highlighted the strategic value of Asian raw materials:

Asia is the source of important raw and semi-processed materials, many of them of strategic value. Moreover, in the past, Asia has been a market for the processed goods of industrialized states, and has been for the Western colonial powers a rich source of revenue from investments and other invisible earnings.²⁸ Before liberation, the puppet South Vietnam government had granted offshore oil concessions to some oil cartels.

Suppression of revolutions is endemic to capitalism. This makes

more of Vietnam type conflicts likely in future.²⁰

The recently reported increase in the US involvement in Oman, where the decade-old leftist rebellion in Dhofar is being fought out by the British air force and army personnel and Iranian troops under US advisers, is a portent in this direction.

¹ See for example, Roland Steel, *Pax Americana*, New York 1968, pp 10-11.

² Earnest R May, *Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy*, Oxford 1973.

³ A well documented book by Carl Marzini, *We Can Be Friends*, New York 1952, antedates the numerous "revisionist" writings.

⁴ Among such numerous writings are: William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, New York 1962; Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and the US Foreign Policy, 1943-45*, New York 1968 and *Roots of American Foreign Policy* Boston 1969; Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and US Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*, New York 1972; David Horowitz, *Empire And Revolution: A Radical Interpretation of Contemporary History*, New York 1969; and *Free World Colossus*, New York 1965; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansionism*, Ithaca 1963; Diana S Clemens, *Yalta*, Oxford 1972; Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*, Oxford 1972; Richard J Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution*, New York 1968; Lloyd C Gardner, et al, (eds.), *Orgins of the Cold War*, 1970; and Lloyd C Gardner, et al, *Creation of American Empire: The US Diplomatic History*.

The "revisionists" do not all stand on a common plank. Some "soft" revisionists point to the break between the policy of Roosevelt and Truman, as against the "hard" ones for whom cold war "was the inevitable result of the American system as it developed over the years."

⁵ Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War 1939-45*, New York 1968, pp 363-7; Roy Willis, *Europe in Global Age 1939 to the Present*, New York 1968, pp 180-4.

⁶ Frederick L Schuman, *International Politics, The Destiny of the Western State System*, New York 1948, pp 887-98.

⁷ Frederick L Schuman, *Russia since 1917: Four Decades of Soviet Politics*, New York 1957, pp 320-2.

⁸ Wright, *op.cit.*, p 265; "United States became an "Economic Giant", Truman, *Public Papers*, 1947, p 168.

⁹ Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States 1941-45*, Philadelphia 1972, pp 131-2.

¹⁰ *Pionerskaya Pravda*, 12 August 1947, quoted in Joseph Clark, "Detente—Shadow or Substance", *Dissent*, Summer 1974, p 444.

¹¹ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, New York 1969, p 753.

¹² C L Sulzberger, *A Long Row of Candles: Memoirs and Diaries 1934-54*, New York 1969, p 313.

¹³ "The economic US dilemma was that much of the market place was closed. This was as true of British Commonwealth as it was of Soviet Union (and other Communist areas), and at the time of the Lend-Lease agreements in 1941, and again during negotiations for the British loan in 1945, US used its heaviest financial weapon to force Britain to break down their imperial preference system and open their markets. They only met with limited success. President Truman was worried that this trend was apparent throughout". Stephen E Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*, London 1971, p18

¹⁴ LaFeber, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Quoted in Kolko, *The Politics of War*, p 254.

¹⁶ Robert F Smith, *The United States and Cuba: Business and Diplomacy, 1917-70*, New Haven 1960, pp 152-3; Lloyd C Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy*, Madison 1964, pp 116-18.

- ¹⁷ Williams, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁸ See Ambrose, *op. cit.*, p 19.
- ¹⁹ Richard D Robinson, *International Business Policy*, New York 1966, p 220.
- ²⁰ Eugene R Black, "The Domestic Dividends of Foreign Aid", *Columbia Journal of World Business*, vol 1, Fall 1965, p 23.
- ²¹ For US opposition to Democratic Socialism in West Germany, see John Gimble, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military 1945-49*, Stanford 1968, pp 117-20.
- ²² *New York Times*, 13 February 1965.
- ²³ See also David Wise and Thomas B Ross, *The Invisible Government*, New York 1965, pp 116-21.
- ²⁴ Quoted in the *Indian Express*, 11 November 1974. Emphasis added.
- ²⁵ W W Rostow in Ronald Steel, *New York Review of Books*, 2 September 1971.
- ²⁶ *New York Times*, *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of Vietnam War*, New York 1971, p 278 (hereinafter referred to as *Pentagon Papers*). The actual multi-volume *Pentagon Papers* comprise 3000 pages and over 4000 pages of appended documents. Its multi-volume version published by the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee entitled *US Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, a study prepared by Department of Defence, Washington, 1971, though still censored, is better than the over-edited *New York Times* publication.
- ²⁷ Quoted by Harry Magdoff, "The American Empire and the US Economy" in Robert I Rhodes, (ed.), *Imperialism and Underdevelopment: A Reader*, London 1971, p 21.
- ²⁸ House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, *op: cit.*, vol 8, pp 225-64.
- ²⁹ For an excellent account of this view, see Michael T Klare, *War Without End: American Planning for the Next Vietnam*, New York 1973.

Lessons of the Vietnamese Revolution

ON 30 APRIL 1975, the heroic Vietnamese people finally liberated Saigon, and driving out all US personnel put an end to the 117-year-long colonial rule, in particular US neocolonialism that lasted a quarter century. Never in human history has so remarkable a victory been won, and by so small a nation over a superpower possessed of so gigantic a military force. Apart from military and political implications the Vietnamese triumph is a landmark in the philosophical and theoretical advance of the human race.

The victory was heralded by the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Drafted by President Ho Chi Minh, it was announced to the world on 2 September 1945 and since then has continued to guide and inspire the Vietnamese nation. In it Ho Chi Minh cites from the 1776 American Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". Another passage is quoted from the Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen made at the French Revolution in 1791: "All men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights." Ho Chi Minh describes these as 'immortal statements' and 'undeniable truths'. Consistently emphasized in the Vietnamese Declaration are the objectives of liberty, equality and fraternity as well as the ideas of humanity and justice.

In all class societies, and especially under capitalism, colonialism and fascism in this century, human dignity and justice have been repeatedly trampled upon. With the victory of the Vietnam revolution, human dignity has been defended and justice has triumphed, thereby giving tremendous encouragement, hope and conviction to all the oppressed nations and peoples; indeed the entire human race.

The special significance of the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is that it has not only furthered the principles of the American Declaration of Independence and the Human Rights Declaration of the French Revolution, but has put forward the principles of equality and independence of all nations. After quoting a passage

from the US Independence Declaration, Ho Chi Minh wrote: "In a broader sense, it means: all the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have the right to live and to be happy and free." In other words, equal and free are not only individuals: all the nations, large or small, should also be equal and free, and should be entitled to decide their own affairs by themselves. "Nothing is more valuable than independence and freedom", Ho Chi Minh added.

As is well known, the history of mankind ever since the birth of class society has been basically a history of big power centralism in international relations, the powerful states absorbing, ruling and subjugating the small. The United Nations was founded on 24 October 1945. Its organizational structure, however, was based on big power centralism, authorizing the five powers to occupy the exclusive seats of permanent members in the Security Council, with the privilege of exercising the veto. In contrast, the Vietnamese Declaration, made two months ahead of the UN Charter, advanced self-reliance and independence as the cardinal concepts in the relations between nations.

Equality in International Relations

The very processes through which the Vietnam revolution developed represent a step-by-step resistance to the principles of big power centralism. The 1954 Geneva Agreement's significance was that it recognized the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people. Big power 'grace and favour' at the Geneva Conference came through in the official communique which reads in part: "Final Declaration...of the Geneva Conference on the problem of restoring peace in Indochina, in which the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Vietnam (Saigon Administration), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America took part."

By contrast, the 1973 Paris Agreement is a document in which Vietnam finally succeeded in getting its fundamental national rights recognized by the US after a diplomatic struggle as an equal for four years and eight months, while at the same time carrying on the war of resistance. It was only after the signing of the agreements that the other big powers and the United Nations recognized it. The rapid development of the processes of revolution in the southern part of Vietnam, especially since March 1975, is nothing but the legitimate exercise of the rights to self-determination both in the liberated zones and in the areas formerly controlled by the Saigon regime.

Thus, the victory in Vietnam marks the beginning of the end of big power centralism, and the establishment of the principles of self-reliance, independence and democracy among nations, making the way clear for genuine internationalism.

One of the most important implications of the Vietnam resolution is the fact that it is a revolution which finally proved to be victorious after a struggle fought under the most difficult conditions compared with other

revolutions. The protagonists of the Vietnam revolution were the people in a small country in south-east Asia. They had to carry out the war face to face, first with Japanese imperialism, then the French and lastly the US. It was a protracted struggle for three decades. Vietnam had to carry out the revolution exclusively on its own strength.

Under these conditions, there was no way other than to provide all people with opportunities for the full play of their independent attitudes and creativity to the maximum possible extent and lay a solid foundation for a broad united front. The principles of democracy thoroughly permeated the military and other organizations of the people. In the attempt to find solutions to the problems of ethnic minorities, the principles of democracy have been applied in a manner unprecedented in the rest of the world. These principles found application not only in the formation of a united front among the three peoples of Indochina, but of the international movement of solidarity against the Vietnam war on the broadest scale ever witnessed in world history.

United Front, Socialist Vanguard

The Vietnamese in the South adopted a strategy in the cities, plains, and mountains, organically uniting the military, political, propaganda and diplomatic struggles. And each struggle was raised to new levels strong enough to cope with neocolonialism. Of special importance is that the Vietnam revolution has further enhanced the of national self-determination as enunciated by Marx, Engels and Lenin, and that the concept of fundamental national rights has been presented in the new context in which the principles of independence and sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity are emphasized. The Fundamental Resolution of the Congress of People's Representatives of South Vietnam (Constitution) passed on 8 June 1969, when the Provisional Revolutionary Government was established, reads in part: "Independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity are sacred and inalienable fundamental national rights of every people". The Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam reads in chapter I: "The United States and all other countries respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam."—Indeed, unity and territorial integrity constitute integral parts of the fundamental national rights that must be won by any people whose territory is divided under neocolonialism.

Ever since the founding of the Indochina Communist Party in 1930, the revolution has been led consistently by the working class and its vanguard party on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. In Vietnam, Marxism-Leninism became a creative energy encouraging people to think not with the brains of other Communist Parties, but with their own. There have been no personality cults or purges: party members and the masses have been guaranteed the opportunity to give expression to their independence and creativity to the fullest possible extent.

While the Vietnam revolution was carried through under conditions of socialist construction in the north and control of the puppet colonial regime in the south, the revolutionary forces creatively built up the combined strength of both socialism and national liberation. It is misleading to see it as socialism of an agrarian country. The technological revolution, the revolution in production relations, and the revolutions in thought and culture have all been organically combined in Vietnam by the Workers' Party successfully guaranteeing the working class the opportunity to exercise its leadership. And in so doing, the people of Vietnam mastered the achievements of the most advanced level of science and technology, and won a victory over the US in the field of military technology.

In this respect, a number of publicists err in saying that Vietnam represents merely the victory of nationalism. Indeed it is a victory of socialism reinforced by complete democracy, creativity and national independence, a victory of the national struggle led by Marxism-Leninism. Vietnam has thus demonstrated the vitality of Marxism-Leninism as the most powerful liberating force.

Imperialism Is Not Invincible

The whole process of the war in Vietnam unmasked the criminal nature of US imperialism and of Japanese monopoly capital. How can the world forget the astronomical volume of bombs, toxic gases, poisonous chemicals and other atrocious weapons of mass destruction which killed thousands of Vietnamese? Equally to be recalled are the genocide in many places including Song My, destruction of water conservation facilities, defoliation, artificial creation of millions of 'refugees' and open kidnapping of hundreds of thousands of orphans and adults. In no war so far fought had the racist, hypocritical, and malicious nature of US imperialism been revealed to the light of day so fully as in this war of aggression. US imperialism, which focused on Indochina as target of its tactics of hitting the smaller enemies one by one, suffered its most ignominious defeat.

Special mention should also be made of the role of Japanese monopoly capital and its government. As accused by the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam three decades ago, Japanese imperialism starved two million Vietnamese to death in the Second World War. Far from apologizing to the Vietnamese people for this and other war crimes and without making reparations to them, Japanese monopoly capital and its government have consistently supported US imperialism in its aggression, affording it the free use of military bases, facilitating the procurement of munitions, and extending assistance to the Saigon puppet regime. Japanese monopoly capital made inroads into Saigon, and as in creating the so-called "Honda economy" aided and abetted US imperialism in its drive for super-profits. Through the whole process of the development of the war in Vietnam from beginning to end the true nature of neocolonialist Japanese government and monopoly capital parasitic to US imperialism, has been disclosed, and their policy

for Indochina has ended in utter fiasco.

Vietnam has taught us that not the slightest illusion should be entertained of US imperialism and Japanese monopoly capital; and that by united struggle, the people will be able to defeat US imperialism and frustrate its neocolonialist machinations. By their struggle and self-sacrifice, Vietnam has demonstrated the atrocious nature and the inevitable defeat of US imperialism, as well as the vulnerability of Japanese monopoly capital. This is simultaneously a warning and object lesson for Afro-Asia and Latin America, Japan and America and indeed to all the people of the world who are struggling against US imperialism.

What kind of theoretical tasks have been posed to Marxism-Leninism, philosophy and the social sciences by the victory of the Vietnam revolution?

Communist Unity

During the last two decades or so, when Vietnam was waging a life and death struggle against US imperialism, disunity came to the fore in the international communist movement. The controversy centred around the nature of US imperialism and the method of struggle against it, the nature of war in our days, peaceful co-existence of the two different social systems and national liberation movement, and the nature of an international united front. The victory of the Vietnamese revolution has shown the way to a practical solution to this controversy. A telling blow has been dealt to the revisionist and opportunist tendency to whitewash US imperialism. The correctness of regarding Indochina as the focal point of international confrontation between imperialism and the anti-imperialist forces has been proved, and along with that, the correctness of forming a broad international united front in support of the Vietnamese people. Eight years ago, General Vo Nguyen Giap made the following prediction:

There is an advantageous condition for the development of the war for national liberation in the present-day general offensive of the world revolution. The war of national liberation has the possibility of winning victory, and it is sure to win. But this victory is not necessarily *linked with a world war or with revolution in the imperialist countries that are waging aggression.* (Emphasis added)¹

Modern revisionism or right-wing opportunism made the mistake of asserting that the national liberation war would possibly lead to world war, and therefore took a cool attitude in supporting the former. Trotskyism or left-wing opportunism showed its bankruptcy by holding that the national liberation war could not be victorious without revolution in the imperialist metropolises and therefore condemned the struggle of the Vietnamese people as "nationalistic". Both these errors have been shown up by historical reality.

Big power nationalism now hinging upon US-USSR and US-China detente is bound to slow down the progress of history for some time ahead. Yet this tendency is no longer capable of upsetting the

triumph of independence and internationalism, the correctness of which has been verified by the Vietnamese revolution. The principle of independence will occupy an increasingly accepted status in the world communist movement in the years to come, thereby contributing towards the recovery of unity both within the movement and in the socialist camp. Such an attitude will also encourage an independent and creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory.

The victory of the Vietnam revolution is the miracle, so to say, of our days. But what is important for Marxists is not merely to praise it but to study and explain it scientifically, drawing lessons from this achievement for further advancement of philosophy and the social sciences, and by so doing to contribute toward the development of revolution in our own countries.

Fields for Intense Study

It will not suffice to speak merely of the revolutionary traditions, heroic qualities and spiritual strength of the Vietnamese nation without explaining these from the standpoint of dialectical materialism. Research workers in philosophy and the social sciences should start studying the natural conditions and productive forces, social and communal structure, production relations, political superstructure, military organization and military theory as well as the ideology, culture, art and religions of the Vietnamese people. In this respect the Vietnamese revolution has presented quite a few new problems to be studied in relation to the theory of socialism, socialist economics, socialist agriculture, industrialization, new democratic economy, rural sociology, technological revolution, problems of state and local autonomous bodies, united front, party-building, military affairs, international jurisprudence, problems of nationality, liberation and equality of women, literature, education, ethics, medicine and so forth. At the same time, the US war of aggression against Vietnam has produced the most up-to-date material for the study of problems of modern imperialism, state monopoly capitalism, neocolonialism and the state with special reference to puppet regimes and divided countries, war crimes, and US society. Indeed, there can be no advance of today's philosophy and social sciences without studying, in depth and range, this great event of our time.

The US war of aggression against Vietnam was not only a war of aggression which US imperialism attempted to carry through with all its military, political and economic strength, but it was a war waged by mobilizing all the strength of the latest developments of the various bourgeois ideologies and social sciences which US imperialism had at its disposal. Not only the ideologies of anti-communism, racism, and neocolonialism, but also downright pragmatism were fully applied. It is not a difficult task to prove that pragmatism has been the philosophical basis of the Eisenhower-Kennedy intervention, the Johnson-Rostow escalation, and of the McNamara march to 'security'.^a

It is also evident that the theory of "modernization" fathered by

Walt Rostow (chairman of the State Department's Policy Planning Council under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and author of *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, and *View from the Seventh Floor*) was applied to Vietnam. Speaking of former Harvard professor of political science Henry Kissinger, it is worth recalling that ever since the publication of his *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* in 1957, he had been a key policymaker of US imperialism's global strategy, a shadow "strategist" in the conduct of aggression against Vietnam by means of the "special warfare" and "local warfare" strategies employed by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. After the resignation of Rostow, Kissinger appeared on the stage as the overt "strategist" of the Nixon administration, with what may be called a "multi-dimensional deterrent strategy", himself directing it.

Ideological Struggle with Imperialism

Samuel Huntington, chairman of the Department of Government at Harvard, armed with his own theory³ of 'modernization' became chairman of the Council on Vietnamese Studies of the South East Asia Development Advisory Group (SEADAG) and laid the theoretical foundations for the pacification programmes of South Vietnam by his 'modernization' and 'urban revolution'. The compilation of military budgets and the formulation of military theories made use of the research methods and techniques developed by the RAND Corporation, a think-tank of the US military, and these have now become part of the subject matter of systems engineering in the name of Planning, Programming and Budgeting Systems (PPBS). Michigan State University is a neocolonialist institution controlled by the CIA⁴ where secret police personnel of the Saigon puppet regime were trained. It formed the "Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group", sent a number of sociologists to South Vietnam to study the communal structure, serving the neocolonialist rule and the "pacification programme".

In this way, US imperialism put into its war of aggression the most up-to-date achievements in the fields of ideology and the social sciences, especially in military theory, international political science, sociology, economics, business management and operations research. History knows of no war of aggression in which so many "first class" mercenary scientists were mobilized.

Through the heroic practice of the Vietnamese revolutionaries, Marxism-Leninism vanquished the latest and most powerful ideological weapons of US imperialism. The tremendous significance of this fact should be emphasized for the benefit of the world of thought and learned societies which are under the influence of the ideology and social sciences of US imperialism.

Enduring their matchless sacrifice in blood, sweat and tears, the people of Vietnam have defeated US imperialism in all fields thereby inspiring courage and strengthening conviction all over the world. If the

significance of Vietnam is to be made really meaningful, the theory and practice of Marxist philosophers and social scientists should be raised to higher levels. Only through such a struggle can the philosophy and social-sciences of the world be developed to an extent sufficient to meet the needs of revolutionary movements everywhere.

SHINGO SHIBATA

- ¹ Vo Nguyen Giap, "Great Victory, Great Tasks" *Nhan Dan*, 14 September 1967.
- ² K S Davis, *Eisenhower: Soldier of Democracy*, 1952; T C Sorenson, *The Kennedy Legacy*, 1969; R S McNamara, *The Essence of Security*, 1968.
- ³ S Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 1968; Also "Getting Ready for Political Competition in South Vietnam" March 1969, SEADAG Studies.
- ⁴ See *Asahi Shimbun*, Evening Edition, 27 April 1966.

Neocolonialist Aid and Trade

A SYSTEMATIC plunder of developing countries is made by means of various forms of non-equivalent exchange, which mainly finds expression in the artificial imposition by the monopolies of the lowest possible prices on the developing countries' agricultural produce and raw materials and the highest possible prices for their industrial goods and raw materials. Arguments by some apologists of neocolonialism, that the only explanation for the low prices paid to developing countries is the low labour productivity in the mining industry and agriculture, are blatantly inconsistent.

The main explanation for the low prices is the discriminatory policy of imperialist monopolies in production and export of manufactured goods and in the extraction and purchase of raw materials and agricultural produce. In the developing countries, monopoly capital not only functions like capital elsewhere (in that it immediately appropriates part of the unpaid labour, that is part of the created value) but also as a part of world capital controlling the economic and trade relations of many developing countries. In view of this the imperialist monopolies in appropriating part of the surplus value on the spot, effect the systematic plundering of the developing countries in the sphere of their foreign trade. Monopolies are resorting to such manoeuvres as refusing to sell machinery, equipment and other commodities (so as to force up their prices) and refusing to buy goods from the developing countries (which thus temporarily lose their use value, so that in the long run these countries are compelled to sell these goods at lower prices).

Prices of coffee, tea and cocoa for instance in the relatively short period of eight years from 1954 to 1962 dropped by more than 50 per cent and in 1958 alone there was a 30 per cent drop. The most serious slump in prices for raw materials and agricultural produce was felt in 1962 and the overall trend has not changed since. In 1967 there was a further drop in raw sugar, coffee and wool prices and also in the prices of a large number of tropical exports. As a result the export earnings of developing countries for one and the same quantity of goods or even a larger one diminishes from one year to the next and their annual losses consist of hundreds of millions of dollars, while their exports fall in value and

constitute a smaller share in world exports: in fiscal 1966 their share dropped by 20 per cent.

Between 1953 and 1967 the developing countries' share in the total volume of world trade dropped from 27 to 19 per cent, and there was also a drop over the same period in their share in the world trade in raw materials and semi-manufactured goods from 54 to 42 per cent. The drop in prices for raw materials and semi-manufactured goods from the developing countries and the shrinking of their share in world trade in these two fields can also be accounted for in part in the expanding production of artificial substitutes for natural raw materials as a result of technological revolution which has practically passed the developing countries by. Other circumstances also foster non-equivalent exchange—the correlation of prices on local and world markets, and competition between the various groupings of imperialist powers on which, to varying degrees, the developing countries depend.

Deficits and Dumping

All these factors affect the trading record of the developing countries. While the developing countries' trade with imperialist powers showed a favourable balance (approximately 4500 million dollars) in 1951-56, over the following five years 1957-62 it showed a deficit of 8350 million dollars. The deficit remained at approximately the same level in subsequent years. Typically enough the prices for raw materials from the leading capitalist powers remained virtually unchanged. The following facts testify to the scale of the plunder effected by the imperialist monopolies by means of various forms of non-equivalent exchange: in 1959 alone the countries of Latin America lost close on one thousand million dollars in their trade with USA, and in 1960 and 1965 these countries have been losing approximately 1500 million dollars annually in their trade with the United States, while their losses incurred in trading raw materials and agricultural produce with western Europe and America during those five years made up a sum equivalent to the total economic aid they received over the same period. Thus the industrially developed capitalist countries profit from their trade with developing countries, while the latter incur tremendous losses as result of this trade. Japan's exports to Nigeria in 1965 exceeded her imports from that country 10.8 times, the respective increase for her trade with Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda being 4.1, 3.8, 2.4 and 1.8 times. The deficit in Mexico's trade balance in 1965 came to 402 million dollars and that of the whole of Latin America for 1961 and 1962 came to approximately a thousand million, while according to estimates by the well-known economist Victor Urquidí it reached no less than 1520 million dollars by 1970.

Other neocolonialist practices in foreign trade relations have a no less adverse effect on the economy of developing countries, particularly dumping. The practice not only serves to disorganize the internal markets of developing countries but also leads to sharp fluctuations in agricultural

production causing the ruin of millions of peasant holdings. The most significant example of disguised dumping effected by the United States is its mass sale of agricultural "surpluses" on the markets of the developing countries under US PL 480, a practice which had become one of the main levers of US foreign policy. The disastrous effect of these "surpluses" under the guise of "aid" on the markets of these countries stands out particularly clearly in the case of India. It began to import American grain (wheat, rice and maize) in 1951 when there had been a marked rise in grain and food prices on account of bad harvests. Between 1951 and 1958 the annual imports of American "surpluses" did not exceed 1,500,000 tons. However these imports were noticeably stepped up in 1959 and 1960 to 3,100,000 tons and 4200,000 tons. In May 1960 the United States and India signed an agreement allowing for deliveries of 16,000,000 tons of grain and 1,000,000 tons of rice in the course of following four years.

Food Aid

From then on these grain deliveries have taken the form of an alternative to agrarian reforms which in the opinion of many economists are absolutely vital for the expansion of agricultural production. This policy has resulted in our grain production showing a marked decline from 12,000,000 tons in 1961-62 to 9,000,000 in 1963-64. Smaller grain harvests have led to a rise in grain prices, and this in turn made India still more dependent on American grain deliveries which by 1964 exceeded 5,000,000 tons. Nevertheless, these deliveries on an average did not make up more than 10 per cent of our market stocks: they were used to supply the army and the urban poor in the country's industrial centres. Another point that should be noted in this connection is that because of the poor sections' low purchasing power the grain supplied by the US was sold on the internal market at prices considerably lower than the import price. The situation in its turn required the allocation of considerable subsidies out of the budget. In the period 1956-64 alone the government spent close on Rs 1000 million on these subsidies.

American grain deliveries were not the decisive factor in the supply of the population with grain and foodstuffs, in particular in 1964-65 when local production of cereals (wheat, rice and other) rose to 87,000,000 tons as against 79,400,000 tons for the preceding year. They continue to constitute a disorganizing factor in both the home market and cereal production. Given the low purchasing power of the poor, large quantities of US grain often fell into the hands of dealers who, making the most of the situation, later sold it again at higher prices. The farmers, in their turn, having virtually no machines or fertilizers and seeing no hope of increasing their incomes from long-term investment in their holdings, refrained from making such investment during those years which in the long run led to the shrinkage of grainsown area throughout the country.

The solution to India's grain problem is believed to be the creation of stable conditions favouring the expansion of agricultural production.

Many of our experts agree that if the Indian government made use of those sums, which were spent on subsidizing the sale of American grain on the internal market, to effect agrarian reforms, positive results would have been appreciable at the time. But so far no changes have been made: in 1966 India concluded a new agreement with the United States for additional grain deliveries (amounting to 167 million dollars) subject to the same conditions as before.

Mass dumping of "surpluses" on the Indian market enabled the US government and monopolies to gain a firm foothold in the private sector of the country's economy and start putting out feelers for Indian finance since almost all the earnings from sales of these surpluses were either placed at the disposal of the US embassy in India or made subject to embassy control when distributed in the form of loans, credits or subsidies. The US embassy here used this money not infrequently for interfering in India's internal affairs as was the case, for instance, during the 1967 elections. Seventy-five per cent of the money made from these grain sales was spent on long-term loans for construction of projects agreed on by both parties in advance, 5 per cent on financing Indian firms linked with American capital, and 20 per cent was placed at the disposal of the US embassy in India. The US government's rupee deposits in this country had reached six thousand million dollars in 1969.

The conclusion can thus be drawn that deliveries of American grain "surpluses" to India not only led to stagnation in local agricultural production, disorganized the Indian market, caused losses in the state budget and intensified inflation as a result of increased grain prices, but also promoted deeper penetration of the Indian economy and Indian finance by American capital.

Other motives lie behind the dumping of agricultural produce. The government subsidizes the export of "surpluses" out of its own budget, to which end, strictly speaking, PL 480 was really introduced in the first place. If it is from this angle that we evaluate American "gifts" to the developing countries they will appear essentially as another type of dumping, seeing that the consumer is given no reduction on the retail prices for those commodities which the country in question receives as "gift".

Collective Colonialism

Foreign monopolies often resort to creating assembly plants on trading basis, which are given the grand titles of "factory" or "workshop," where certain types of machinery or equipment are assembled or adjusted using parts and units manufactured in leading capitalist countries. This practice is often found in many countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa and is used with particular enthusiasm by the American and West German monopolies to create the illusion that they are promoting the development of industry designed to produce means of production in these countries, while in actual fact they compel the developing country to import from the leading capitalist countries not merely

machines and equipment, but individual units, spare parts, semi-manufactured goods and synthetic raw materials, and at prices dictated by those same monopolies, who thus succeed in tying up the economies of the developing countries still more closely with their own and securing themselves profitable marketing outlets.

International financial organizations constitute an instrument for penetrating Asian, African and Latin American countries, making it easy for the multi-monopolies. It is by no chance that new organizations are being established and the scale of their operations is increasing. For example, in 1962 credits and loans issued by all international financial organizations totalled \$ 194 million, and in 1969, \$ 850 million. In the 1971-72 fiscal year, the leading group of financial organizations, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association, made financial commitments valued at \$ 1966 million and \$ 1000 million respectively.

The activity of international financial organizations is one of the most characteristic manifestations of collective colonialism. The growing imperialist expansion through these organizations is based on utilizing the objective interests of developing countries in external sources for financing their national economies. At the same time Asian, African and Latin American countries are increasingly realizing that the "aid" through international associations of Western countries serves first and foremost the interest of transnational monopolies.

G V RAO

BOOK REVIEWS

Room in the Sky

SURESH KOHLI (ED.), ASPECTS OF INDIAN LITERATURE : THE CHANGING PATTERN, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi 1975.

SURESH KOHLI tossed a bunch of typescripts to the printer; the latter made plates out of them and ran them between the cylinders. A book was ready. The preliminary editorial labours and the intermediate proof-reading have been dispensed with. *Social Scientist* has neither the space nor the patience to list the irksome results of this editorial labour-saving. All the same, readers of this book will be amused to find that Mulk Raj Anand is capable of howlers like "Brahma's cohabitation with his consort Lakshmi." Readers may correct 'sardism' into sadism. But what are they expected to do with the following sentence from the same author's article? "This sardism is not even the sardism of Marx which is at least based on the idea of pleasure."¹ In his contribution to the section entitled "Obscenity and Sex" Anand talks more about the hypocrisies in the realm of sexual morality than about obscenity in literature. The examples he cites are both British: Joyce's *Ulysses* and Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The only Indian book he refers to is *Kamakala*, his own that is. And how turgid this art critic's prose can be!

In all the creative arts, and in creative living or loving, there is the compulsion of conscience, through which the subtlest vibrations of the body-soul outweigh the depths in which feelings, emotions and passions have been surging against the conflicts of inner mood and outer situation until, from the lamentations of discontent and ardent desire, the violins of the two bodies, with taught strings, may seek the sound of each other's music in the mirror of the four eyes.²

Balwant Gargi deplores the double standards adopted by the English-speaking Panjabis who frown upon obscene expressions in their mother tongue. Peasants, truck drivers, masons, working women—all freely use words which are obscene. Writers cannot help reflecting such

language in their work—this is the gist of Gargi's argument. After giving a list of Panjabi and Hindi fiction writers who describe sexual scenes with varying degrees of frankness he pleads for tolerance on the part of readers and critics. The third contributor to this aspect is Aditya Sen who finds it difficult to disentangle pornography from progressive literature.

The problem of obscenity in literature is of course relevant and should be discussed by writers, critics and readers. But a discussion on obscenity misses its mark if the only demand is for franker portrayal of sexual themes without considering and clarifying the aesthetic issues involved. The aesthetics of obscenity, the artistic validity and justification of uninhibited descriptions of sexual scenes, the relativity of norms of sexual behaviour and obscenity, the necessity to prevent the collapse of aesthetic equilibrium—all these have to be discussed concretely. But the three contributors are mainly concerned with the writer's right to be more uninhibited. The same one-sidedness is seen in the section entitled "Literature and the Law". Pratap Sharma, B R Agarwala and Shrikant Varma deal with the retrogressive nature of the censorship laws and the mindless bureaucratic interferences with writer's freedom to publish. Here also they cite instances of legal or bureaucratic suppression of supposedly obscene material. It is true that Shrikant Varma mentions some instances of harassment of writers for their political convictions. But the suppression of alleged "subversive" matter and the mean and devious and legally unchallengeable persecution of politically "undesirable" writers have not received the attention it deserves. I believe that writers in India betray a lamentable lack of professional solidarity. When a radical writer is harassed or persecuted the "respectable" writers will not protest for fear of displeasing the political distributors of awards and medals.

Passing Phase, Perhaps

In the section "Literature of Protest" Pritish Nandy and Bhisham Sahni make a forceful plea for the production of committed literature effectively expressing the anguish and protest of the common man. Nandy draws our attention to a paradox in the cultural situation of the newly liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America: "The committed poet assumes a universal audience even though he knows his books are sold only in very small editions and very few people finally get to read him. He is in that strange predicament where he speaks for those who do not know he speaks for them"⁸. Nandy does not see a single protest poet among the Indo-Anglian poets which confirms the opinion that it is a rootless literature unconcerned with the realities of our country. He rightly calls upon the poets to break away from the tradition of British poetry and seek their roots among the masses. But curiously Nandy ends with an anti-poetical statement: "The time for poetry is almost over. It is the time to act." If one's poetry reading is confined to the stuff produced in English, such a despondent conclusion will not surprise us. But these poets operate only on the fringes of Indian cultural consciousness. Even then

Nandy should know that the time for poetry can never be over and that it is always time to act. The current tragedy is that we have neither the one nor the other. Maybe, it is just a passing phase. After all, lulls precede storms.

In a brief but closely argued article Bhisham Sahni has emphasized the need to analyze the concrete conditions of our living instead of indulging in generalizations about the "human predicament", "absurdity", or "over turning of values". He is perceptive enough to distinguish between authentic protest based on progressive values and phoney protest based on trivialities. Lokenath Bhattacharya's contribution to the same section is rambling, verbose and pointless. There is no point in refuting another's pointlessness. But as Bhattacharya is an important functionary of the National Book Trust—he is the deputy director—his views should be known to the intellectual community: "Any protest, if at all it is intended, is bound to lose its edge in works of fiction and drama, primarily concerned as these latter have to be with the unfolding of a plot involving characters and actions".⁴ According to him, poetry, being "totally subjective", "the purest and most individual utterance" may express protest. Even here he has important qualifications:

But I believe that poet's essential job is to write, to give artistically valid expression to his feelings and experiences which in the very nature of things will have to be personal and can in no case be collective. I believe that the poet must first belong to his room in order that he may come down to the street and later, again return to his room. The poet must have his room and also the sky—in that order; that is, he cannot belong to the sky [*sic*] unless he has his room"⁵

Some people wonder why the National Book Trust is so ineffective. Let them meditate on the symbolism of the quoted passage.

Looking at Society

The subject of "Social Realism and Change" is inadequately covered by Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, Rajendra Yadav and Kailash Vajpeyi. Abbas and Vajpeyi make a cursory survey of progressive writing in Hindi, Urdu and Panjabi. Rajendra Yadav feels that the younger contemporary writers do not entertain any illusions and do not suffer from any hangover of an earlier idealism. He seems to reduce social realism to an honest and unsentimental portrayal of man-woman relationship which, in his view, constitutes the nucleus of all social changes. I believe that man-woman relationship is an excellent indicator of social changes; but it can hardly be called their nucleus.

The book also contains a section entitled "Literature and Divisive Tendencies". Prabhakar Machwe makes the inevitable appearance with his invariable inanities. He is no doubt keen on combating divisive tendencies based on narrow chauvinism. But his programme for achieving this laudable objective is nothing more impressive than quoting sententious wisdom from Sanskrit, Tamil, Bengali and Marathi to the effect that

"the whole world is my family." The other familiar figure Ka Naa Subramanyam fails to analyze the crucial aspects of the problem, though his asides are provocatively entertaining. He makes a sensible plea for planning a shelf of books which will go to form the basis of a Library of Indian Literature. The trouble with Subramanyam is that he feels himself to be "a normal anti-political, sick-of-politics human being who happens to have been born in India and cannot migrate even if he wants to"⁶. Honestly speaking, many intellectuals will share his sense of deprivation; but with such an attitude of frustration and despair why take the trouble of combating divisive tendencies? This particular section is redeemed by Attar Singh who has some valuable and pertinent ideas on the problem. I think that his suggestion of an integrated course in Indian literature in the Indian universities to provide a national cultural perspective deserves to be seriously taken up by teachers of literature.

MOHAN THAMPI

¹ *Aspects of Indian Literature*, p 51.

² *Ibid.*, p 59.

³ *Ibid.*, p 84.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p 92.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 97-98.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 33.

Inside Primitive Societies

LEWIS H MORGAN, *ANCIENT SOCIETY*, The World Publishing Co, Meridian Books, Cleveland and New York 1963.

THIS IS the *n*th review of a remarkable book written in the nineteenth century.¹ In its incisive analysis of primitive societies and its elaborate theory of primitive history, it still stands out as a rare example of scholarship. Though not answering all the questions relating to primitive society and history, it certainly raises a few ideas of paramount importance. At the same time, in the present situation of a poor development of Marxist concepts and methods for the study of primitive society, this book provides one of the best possible introductions to the Marxist analysis in social anthropology, especially of tribal communities.

As we all know, historical materialism holds that the productive forces at the disposal of a society in a given epoch are its determining factors. And, on the basis of the nature of the productive forces, the ideas and institutions are built while those in turn play an active role in the development of material life.² The peculiarity of the instruments of production is that they are constantly changing due to the epoch's social productive activity and the needs of human society and thereby hold the key to the revolutionary changes in the structure of any society.

For Morgan, history is a process of which man is the subject. "The events of human progress embody themselves, independently of particular men, in a material record, which is crystallized in institutions, usages and customs, and preserved in inventions and discoveries".³ The material record, to him, is "the arts of subsistence", which are not simple cultural traits, but form the basis for defining epochs by setting limits, within which social life and organization unfold in a given historical period.⁴ For instance, he said that the requirements of subsistence determine the extent of family groups.⁵ In the same way, he explained the density of population, migration, emergence of city and the "political society".

The book throughout emphasizes that in the final analysis, economy is the determinant of a particular social system.

Morgan envisioned human history as consisting of three major epochs—savagery, barbarism and civilization, of which the first two were subdivided into a lower, middle, and upper stage, depending on the development in the production of the means of subsistence; for, as he said: “the great epochs of human progress have been identified, more or less directly, with the enlargement of the sources of subsistence.”⁸ His characterization of the different historical periods is as follows:

Lower Savagery	Fruit and nut subsistence
Middle „	Fishing and employment of fire
Upper „	Invention of bow and arrow for hunting
Lower Barbarism	Introduction of pottery (and the village life)
Middle „	Domestication of animals (East); cultivation and stone housing (West)
Upper „	Invention of iron tools and development of plough cultivation
Civilization	Discovery of phonetic alphabet and writing

Engels broadly following Morgan’s prehistoric evolutionary schema noted a clear characterization of the periods: Savagery was the period in which the appropriation of natural products, ready for use, predominated; the things produced by man were, in the main, instruments that facilitated this appropriation. During the age of barbarism knowledge of cattle breeding and land cultivation was acquired, and methods of increasing the productivity of nature through human activity were learnt. Civilization is the period in which knowledge of the further working up of natural products, of industry proper, and of art is acquired.⁷

Science of History

Besides periodization of human history, Morgan also analyzed the development of family, marriage, kinship and government. He said that out of the original conditions of “promiscuous” intercourse, there appeared “consanguine family”, which prohibited the sex relations between parents and children. What followed was the “punaluan family”, which further excluded marriage relations between brothers and sisters. Then came the “pairing family”, a transitional phase to monogamy in which the partners could end the marriage at will. Afterwards came the “patriarchal family” where male had the supreme authority (at times polygyny). Recently we have the “monogamian family” resembling the modern nuclear unit. Regarding further development of family, Morgan said that “it must advance as society advances, and change as society changes, even as it has done in the past. It is the creation of the social system and will reflect its culture”.⁸ Further he said, it was due to the growth of wealth, that there was the transition from the matrilineal descent to patrilineal and to the advent of monogamy as the only way of avoiding any uncertainty in the matter of paternity.⁹ Similarly, the other

institutional developments have different stages but the fact is that all are determined by the whole sphere of property reflecting both inventions and discoveries.¹⁰

Morgan observed the possibility of intermediate stages between the historical phases of society and institutions. He also said that the transitions may follow different paths in different societies.¹¹ Likewise, history affords examples of stagnation when society reached a given form.¹² Even, it is possible to find examples of regression running counter to the path of progress.¹³ In short, Morgan's reasoning does not follow uniformity of human development, as his critics point out. But as his purpose was to work out a science of history, he did not consider the rare characteristics. His attention was focused on the structure of such entities between which the transition was made and their logical relationship.

Though the author dealt conspicuously on the first two epochs of human history he rightly analyzed the process of transformation to the third phase, which again is supposed to develop further. By the end of barbarism, over the increase of production and volume of disposal goods, wealth and property became the dominant forces in society and marked the commencement of civilization.¹⁴ And,

since the advent of civilization, the outgrowth of property has been so immense, its forms so diversified, its uses so expanding and its management so intelligent in the interests of its owners... (However,) A mere property career is not the final destiny of mankind; if progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past... The dissolution of society bids fair to become the termination of a career of which property is the end and aim, because such a career contains the elements of self-destruction... It will be a revival in a higher form of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes.

Materialist Interpretation

Marx and Engels's admiration of Morgan was not for his structural analysis, but for the interaction and the hierarchy of the various phases of social reality. *Ancient Society* was a work of supreme importance to them as it opened their thoughts to the complexity of primitive cultures. Engels described Morgan as the man who "rediscovered in America, in his own way, the materialist conception of history that had been discovered by Marx forty years ago, and in his comparison of barbarism and civilization was led by this conception to the same conclusions, in the main points, as Marx had arrived at."¹⁵ There could hardly be a higher praise.

Morgan's main object was not simply to describe the different stages of human social evolution, but to construct a theory of primitive human history and a set of related propositions. His concepts and methods used for the understanding of human history are of special significance. His operational concepts—form, sequence, ethnic period, arts of subsistence, domination, intermediate stages—define the range of his enterprise. Leaving aside his evolution and structure, the concepts

truly form the backbone of Marxist analysis of prehistoric societies. In fact, not only Marx and Engels but several anthropologists demonstrated the materialism of Morgan.¹⁷

Notwithstanding his assertions on original sexual promiscuity, on matrilineal descent antedating patrilineal descent, and several other viewpoints, which are now regarded as very doubtful, his valuable contribution is to be found in his treatment of the stratified and central-authority-based societies as determined by the development of property. If nothing else, Morgan has articulated a materialist interpretation of primitive society which the pedantic anthropologists have profitably pondered over for sometime. The book, in fact, is thus strewn with highly provocative insights here and there; anthropologists even today find it handsomely rewarding to read the book carefully and assimilate its content in their analytical structure.

JAGANATH PATHY

¹ Lewis H Morgan, *Ancient Society*, The World Publishing Co, Meridian Books, Cleveland and New York 1963. First published in 1877.

² The main features of historical materialism are expounded by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* and again by Marx in the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital*, vol 1.

³ Morgan, *op cit.*, p 311.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 9 and 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p 57.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 19.

⁷ Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1970, p 465.

⁸ Morgan, *op. cit.*, pp 508-9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 485.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 535.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 387 and 441.

¹² *Ibid.*, p 385.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp 39 and 58.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 5-6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p 552.

¹⁶ Engels, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Among others T Harding and E Leacock, "Morgan and Materialism: A Reply to Professor Opler", *Current Anthropology* 5, 1964, pp 109-110.

Prescription, but No Cure

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY, Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals, Government of India, April 1975, p 275, Rs 17.00.

THE COMMITTEE on Drugs and Pharmaceutical Industry under the chairmanship of Jaisukhlal Hathi submitted its report to government on 6 April 1975. In accordance with the terms of reference, it enquired into the production, distribution, price regulation, quality control, technological improvement and Indian and small scale sector development. On these matters the committee came out with its own recommendations.

In appreciation of the fact that ill health has major socio-economic implications, the committee felt that "production and distribution of drugs should constitute an important social responsibility of the state... and should vest with the state"¹. Accordingly, a major role was to be assigned to the public sector and measures were suggested for its growth: the sole responsibility for expanding production of certain drugs; exclusive manufacture of certain drugs at present being imported;² expansion and installation of new capacity; and preference in the manufacture of essential drugs. But the committee failed to suggest nationalization of the private companies which produce below capacity, create artificial shortages and charge enormous prices.

The committee has also failed to suggest a suitable distribution mechanism for essential drugs. No suggestion has been made to check artificial shortages and sale of life-saving drugs in the black market. Nor has it recommended any distribution system to check adulteration. In India, there are 2440 companies, 20,000 chemists and 80,000 distributors of drugs. Adulteration can take place at any of these stages making it difficult to check the quality of drugs. The problem can be solved only if government undertakes the distribution through its own sales depots. The

committee's only recommendation in this regard relates to the distribution of household remedies through such outlets as post offices and dispensaries. Evolving and implementing a suitable distribution mechanism for other essential drugs has been left to the National Drugs Authority of India, a statutory body yet to be created.

Closely linked with distribution is the question of prices. That prices of drugs are the highest in India as compared to the rest of the world was brought out by the Kefauver Committee of the US Senate. In 1963 for the first time, drug prices were stabilized by a control order. In 1970 for the first time, prices were reduced, but continued to soar regardless. The Hathi Committee agrees that this is true. In their words, "the operation of price control does not appear to have contributed materially to the emergence of a product or price pattern which is more in consonance with social needs or national objectives."⁶ The committee revealed how fancy packing and other selling expenditures increase drug prices. The use of brand names as compared to generic names also enables the industry to sell essential drug formulations at varying rates. The recommendation for elimination of brand names and their substitution by generic names is the first essential for bringing down pharmaceutical prices to reasonable levels. However, this suggestion has not found favour with doctors, manufacturers and policymakers. The committee's suggestion of standardization and economy in the use of packing material is also a step in the right direction.

No Hope of a Price Cut

The suggestion has been made to fix prices on the basis of post-tax return of 12-14 per cent on equity or 8-10 per cent profit on sales. This rate of profit on a commodity so essential for human life, and consumed by the masses, seems somewhat unjustified. The committee has also suggested exemption from price control (a) bulk drugs which in terms of basic sales do not exceed Rs 25 lakhs per annum⁴ and (b) formulation units having annual turnover of less than one crore or an all-India sale of less than Rs 15 lakhs.⁵ Thirteen drugs, identified for purposes of generic names, have also been excluded from price control. This selectivity in the system of price regulations is likely to increase the prices of many drugs which at present come under the price control order. The committee itself says, "the range of products coming under price control will be limited and therefore manufacturers will have much more freedom to adjust the prices of other products to market conditions and can earn profits in excess to the ceiling suggested above."⁶ Also, the new price control order will be in the nature of ceiling and the manufacturer will be free to increase the price upto the ceiling without prior approval of the government.

The Hathi Committee also highlighted the problems posed by foreign and multinational pharmaceutical companies in India.⁷ Suggestions were made to stimulate the growth of the Indian sector: manufacture

of bulk drugs (imported till now by the foreign companies in India) within the specified time; takeover of multinational firms; reduction in equity of foreign undertakings to 40 per cent forthwith and progressively to 26 per cent; government purchase of these shares; shift from highly profitable formulation production with imported bulk drugs to basic drugs within a period of three years; licences to the foreign sector only when the Indian sector is not coming forward to manufacture the product; allocation of 50 per cent of authorized production and 50 per cent of production in excess of capacity to non-associated formulations.

Multinationals to Stay

The most important recommendation, that of taking over multinational corporations, has not apparently found favour with the government. Minister K D Malaviya on 27 May 1975 said that there will be no doctrinaire approach to the question of takeover of the foreign drug firms and that they would be allowed to continue in business. As recently as 22 January 1976, there were no signs of change in the government's position. Minister PC Sethi told the Lok Sabha, "The question is a complex one." Powerful international monopolies have been lobbying for new licences, making it clear that they have no intention of sharing production with Indian companies.

Thus we find that Hathi Committee made some 200 recommendations to reduce the ills of the drugs and pharmaceutical industry in India. While it failed to make drastic recommendations with regard to prices and distribution of drugs, some of its vital suggestions of abolition of brand names and government takeover of multinational drug units in India have not been implemented.

MEENA GUPTA

¹ *Report of the Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceutical Industry*, ch III, para 6.

² *Ibid.*, ch III, paras 70-89.

³ *Ibid.*, ch VIII, para 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ch VIII, para 30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ch VIII, paras 35-38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ch VIII, para 40.

⁷ Meena Gupta, "Foreign Monopolies Dominate Indian Drug Industry", *Social Scientist* 36, July 1975, pp 53-60.

ECHOES OF THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

● The conclusions which emerged at the public sessions and group discussions of the Trivandrum conference from 27 to 30 December 1975 will appear in the next number of the **SOCIAL SCIENTIST**, the February issue.

Ensure your copy by placing an order with the newsagent, or better writing to us direct. If your subscription has expired, renew it **NOW** so that you have the upshot, in black and white, of one of the most stimulating deliberations of the International Women's Year.

● The **SOCIAL SCIENTIST**'s 200-page Special Number on Women which came out last month at the All-India Conference contains valuable studies on the women's movement for emancipation.

We have a few copies left at the original price of five rupees. Rush your order with the remittance (Rs 5.25 by ordinary post and Rs 6.50 by registered post) to:

Manager
Social Scientist
Indian School of Social Sciences
Trivandrum-1.

NATION ON THE MOVE

Manifold rise in power

Our power generating capacity touched 19 million KW in 1974. In 1947, the total capacity was 1.3 million KW.

Today 1.5 lakh villages are electrified; 2.44 million pump-sets have been energised in the farms. This year, another 2.6 million KW will be added to our capacity.

**IRON WILL AND
HARD WORK
SHALL SUSTAIN US**

*For a free booklet,
Please write to:
Distribution Manager, D.A.V.P.
'B' Block, Kasturba Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi-110001*

davp 75/449



CHINTHA PUBLISHERS

make an attractive prepublication offer

OF

HOW I BECAME A COMMUNIST

translation of the first part of the
autobiography of

COMRADE E M S NAMBOODIRIPAD

Price : Rs 25

Prepublication offer: Rs 16 plus postage Rs 2

**Last date for receipt of prepublication order :
31 March 1976**

Date of publication : 1 July 1976

**Send your money order or demand draft to
Manager, CHINTHA PUBLISHERS
Trivandrum 695001**

Published and edited by Jacob Eapen on behalf of the Indian School of Social Sciences, Trivandrum-1, and printed by him at S B Press, Trivandrum-1.

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under No. R. N. 23844/72

Licensed to post without pre-payment under No. TV-2. Regd.No. KL/TV/52

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 11 JUNE 1975
Studies in the development of Indian capitalism: *N Ram*;
Political economy of food, Part II: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Jaya Prakash Narayan's politics: *S C Varma*; Notes on: Marxism and Indian sociology; The national sector and commanding heights; Communication on Marxism and quantum mechanics.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST: VOLUME 3 NUMBER 12 JULY 1975
China and the undivided Communist Party of India: *Georges Kristoffel Lieten*; Sociology of conflict theory: *Manorama Savur*; Revolutionary violence in a people's war: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Note on foreign monopolies and the Indian drug industry; Communication on Marx, Samuelson and King.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 1 AUGUST 1975
Theoretical aspects of the national question: *Prakash Karat*; Emergence of nationalism: *Irfan Habib*; National problems in India and pre-revolutionary Russia: *Ajit Roy*; Class character of the nationalist movement: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Regional development and the national question in north-east India: *S K Chaube, S Munsu and A Guha*; Rise and growth of the Bengali nationality: *Partha Chatterjee*.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER 1975. South-east Asia—thirty years on: *Malcolm Caldwell*; Assam's language question in retrospect: *M Kar*; Sonthal problem in nineteenth-century Bengal: *Archana Mandal*; Report on: Christians for socialism; Notes on: Desabhimani study circles in Kerala; Medical representatives on the march.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3 OCTOBER 1975
Historical perspectives on ancient India: *M G S Narayanan*; Peasants and political power in Mexico: *Roger Bartra*; India's first irrigation company: *Sourin Bhattacharya*; Note on indigo planters, Ram Mohan Roy and the Charter Act of 1833.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST : VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4/5 NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER 1975. Perspective of women's movement: *E M S Namboodiripad*; Women's liberation and productive activity: *Manorama Savur*; Rural origins of women's liberation in India: *Gail Omvedt*; Towards Emancipation: *Mythily Shivaraman*; Employment, incomes and equality: *Kumaresh Chakravarty*; Urban working women: *Wanadna Sonalkar*; Literacy, doorway to liberation: *Aleyamma George*.